

OCTOBER 2010
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FAMILY GUY

Up Close & Personal With David Ross

ChOP Talk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2011 Schedule

OMAR

THE MAGNIFICENT

Infante's Courage And Pride
Lead To An All-Star Selection
And Batting Title Contention

Q&A

GETTING TO KNOW

Rookie Mike Minor

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		MIN 7:00	MIN 12:00	WAS		WAS
3 WAS	4 MIL	5 MIL	6 MIL	7 MIL	8 PHI	9 PHI
10 PHI	11 FLA	12 FLA	13 FLA	14 FLA	15 NYM	16 NYM
17 NYM	18 LAD	19 LAD	20 LAD	21 LAD	22 SF	23 SF
24 SF	25 SD	26 SD	27 SD	28 STL	29 STL	

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			SD 7:00		NYM	NYM
5 NYM	6 FLA	7 FLA	8 FLA	9 HOU	10 HOU	
12 HOU	13 HOU	14 NYM	15 NYM	16 NYM	17 TEX	18 TEX
19 TEX	20 TOR	21 TOR	22 TOR	23 SD	24 SD	
26 SD	27 SEA	28 SEA	29 SEA			

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	WAS	WAS	WAS		NYM	NYM
7 NYM	8 FLA	9 FLA	10 FLA	11 CHC	12 CHC	13 CHC
14 CHC	15 SF	16 SF	17 SF	18 SF	19 ARZ	20 ARZ
21 ARZ	22 CHC	23 CHC	24 CHC	25 CHC	26 NYM	27 NYM
28 NYM	29 WAS	30 WAS				

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 STL	2 MIL	3 MIL	4 MIL	5 MIL	6 PHI	7 PHI
8 PHI	9 WAS	10 WAS	11 WAS	12 PHI	13 PHI	
15 PHI	16 HOU	17 HOU	18 ARZ	19 ARZ	20 LAA	21 LAA
22 LAA	23 PIT	24 PIT	25 CIN	26 CIN		
29 CIN	30 SD	31 SD				

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					BAL 7:30	BAL 7:00
3 BAL	4 COL	5 COL	6 COL	7 COL	8 PHI	9 PHI
10 PHI	ALL-STAR GAME - ARIZONA					15 WAS
12 WAS	13 COL	14 COL	15 COL	16 COL	17 CIN	18 CIN
19 CIN	20 PIT	21 PIT	22 PIT	23 PIT	24 FLA	25 FLA
26 FLA						

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				WAS 7:00	LAD 7:30	LAD 7:00
4 LAD	5 PHI	6 PHI	7 PHI	8 STL	9 STL	
11 STL	12 FLA	13 FLA	14 FLA	15 NYM	16 NYM	
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*All times are Eastern and subject to change.
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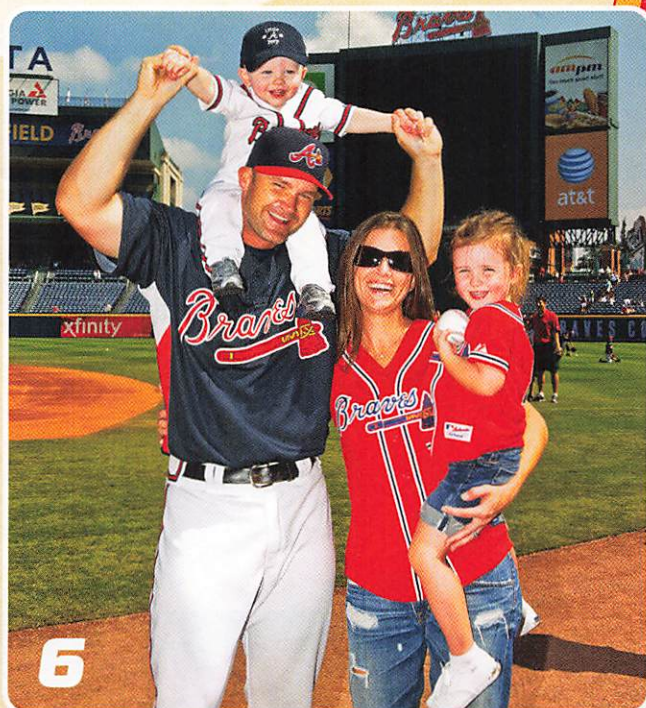
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By Patty Rasmussen

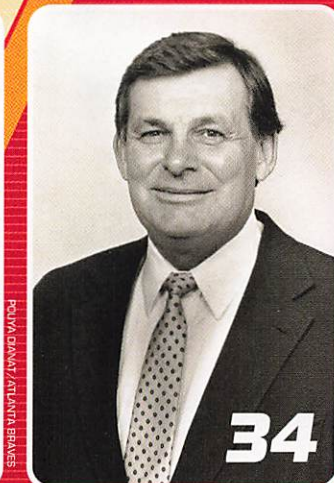
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LOOKING AHEAD

The 2011 Schedule Features Home Opener
On April 8 Against The Phillies



POUYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES



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ATLANTA BRAVES

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OMAR INFANTE
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BATTING ORDER

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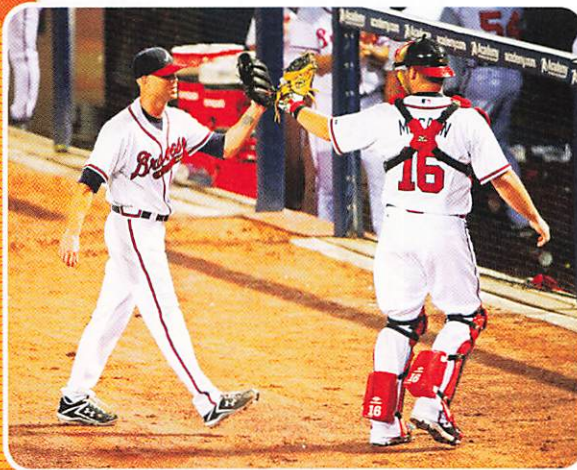


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CHOPTALK USPS Periodicals Publication 022-732; ISSN 1555-1547 is published monthly for \$37.95 per year (\$56.95 Canada and Mexico; \$76.95 other international; payment in U.S. dollars only) by Wonderdog Publishing, Inc. Copyright 2010 with all rights reserved. Reproduction or use, without permission, of any content, in whole or part - in any manner - is prohibited. Office of publication is located at 12829 Trinity Dr., Stafford, Tex. 77477-4214. Visit Braves.com/ChopTalk. E-mail Letters@ChopTalkonline.com. This is the Official Monthly Magazine of the Atlanta Braves. Single copy price is \$4.99. Periodical postage paid at Stafford, Tex., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes and returns to: ChopTalk, P.O. Box 81247, Conyers, Ga. 30013-9247.

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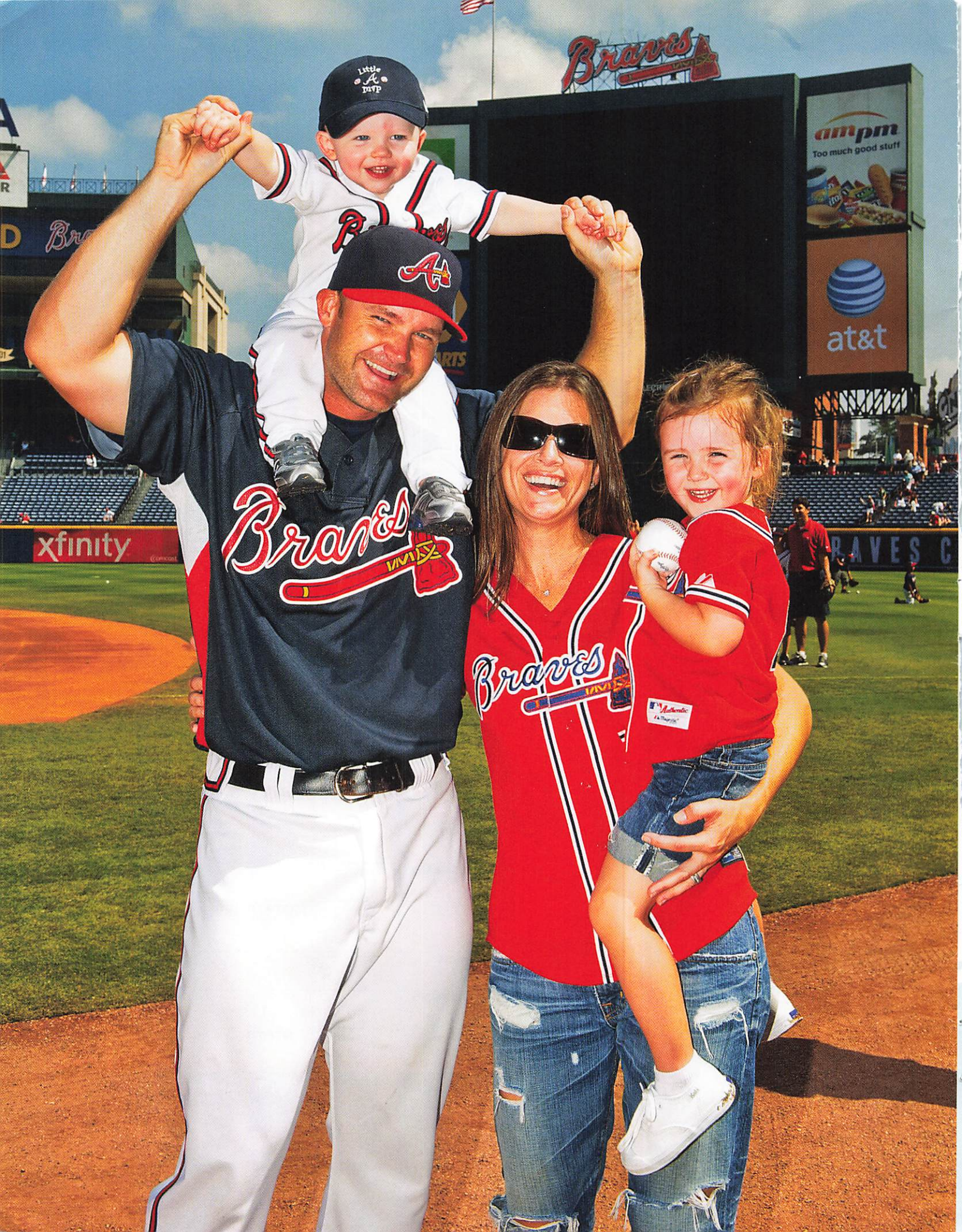
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FAMILY GUY

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

Two-Year Contract Extension Finally Allows Journeyman **David Ross** To Settle In

A low-key conversation in mid-July between Frank Wren and David Ross led to what Ross called the "ultimate compliment" in his career, being signed to a two-year contract extension as the Braves' backup catcher.

"Frank came up to me one day during batting practice and asked, 'Do you like it here?'" recalled Ross.

"I said, 'Yeah, I love it. What's not to like? We're winning. I'm backing up an All-Star, Silver Slugger, great catcher. I'm close to home. I'm catching an incredible staff.'"

The GM suggested Ross have his agent call the Braves to try to work out an extension. The deal was completed in about a week.

"They offered the same thing I had now, two years for \$3 million," said Ross. "After we countered, they ended up giving me a little raise. It was a good offer, and I would have been stupid to turn it down. By the end of my next contract I'll have 10 years [of service] in. That's always been a goal of mine, and I get to stay with this great organization."

For Ross, signing an extension with the Braves was as much of an easy decision as it was to originally sign with Atlanta prior to the 2009 season. To make things even better, his family couldn't be happier.

Always affable, Ross is one of the most well-liked players on the Braves. A thorough professional, he's served as a mentor for Brian McCann, as well as a smart and savvy battery-mate to the staff of veteran and rookie pitchers. Whether he's goofing off with former college teammate Tim Hudson or tapping fellow catcher Brian McCann on the shoulder for a chat, if "Rossy's" calling, his teammates go running.

The 33-year-old Ross loves jokes and was the brains behind several "spirit t-shirts" created for the team, "Gotta grind it" last season, and "Team Diesel" and the

Bobby Cox "153 and counting..." this year.

And he's the same happy fella, in fact even more so, when he's home with his wife, Hyla, and their two children, daughter Landri (3) and son Cole (17 months). Ross relishes spending mornings with his children, whether they're splashing in the pool or climbing on the jungle gym at the park close to their in-season home in Sandy Springs, a north Atlanta suburb.

"I just don't think I can express to anyone how much I love my kids," said Ross, wearing a green turtle-shaped "Silly Bandz" bracelet Landri gave him. "I was telling Brian McCann about the stuff Landri says, like, she was jumping and landed on me and I said, 'Ow! Ow! My boo-boo.' She asked, 'What happened, Daddy? I told her I had a bruise from a foul ball, and she stopped and said very seriously, 'I hope it feels better soon.'" Ross sat still for a second, shook his head, smiled and said, "They just care so much, and it's all unconditional."

The emphasis Ross puts on quality and quantity family time is reflected in his career choices. Signing with the Braves in December 2008 meant Ross was locked in for two years with a club located just a five-hour drive from their off-season home in Tallahassee, Florida.

That decision was made as Ross was



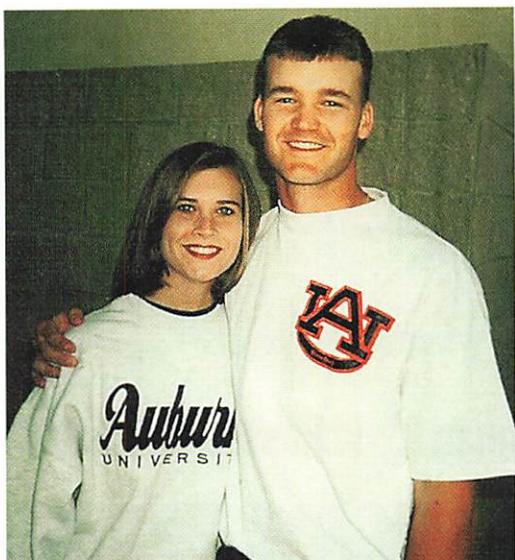
Ross connected for his first career grand slam on Aug. 31 in a 9-2 win against the Mets, and last year his 7 home runs ranked second in the majors for players with less than 130 at-bats.

weighing his options, looking realistically at his career. A journeyman catcher, he played in five different organizations (Dodgers, Pirates, Padres, Reds and Red Sox), both in the majors and the minors, since his initial callup in 2002.

After opening the 2008 season on Cincinnati's disabled list due to back spasms, Ross rehabbed his way back to the big club where he played in 52 games and hit 17 homers before his release in August. He was picked up by the Red Sox and bounced between Triple-A Pawtucket and the big league club until the season ended.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

(Opposite page) During Family Day at Turner Field, David Ross hoists Cole, and his wife, Hyla, holds Landri.



These photos from the Ross family album follow David and Hyla, a couple since high school, beginning with college at Auburn, and continuing to his minor league career at Jacksonville (2001), their engagement at Discovery Cove, and his first major league experience with the Dodgers, right up to the present with Landri and Cole.

"I came to the realization that wherever I was going to be the next year, I wanted to be with a winner," said Ross.

When the Braves approached him, he knew his role would be backing up McCann, an All-Star catcher seven years his junior. But Ross' ego wasn't in danger of being bruised. He just wanted to play for a team he felt had a chance to win, preferably somewhere family-friendly.

"I grew up, living in the South, watching the Braves," he said. "Atlanta was close to home, and at that point we had another child on the way. Huddy was here, and I called him. He said everyone here is great, it's a good organization, and I'd love it here. That peace of mind was a big thing."

It helped that Hyla supported the decision just as wholeheartedly. Hyla is Ross' rock, even though she broke his heart, as he loves to tease. The couple has known each other since high school when her brother played baseball with Ross. They continued to date when Ross went off to Auburn University, and she was a senior in high school. She joined him at Auburn when he was a sophomore and she was a freshman. While there, they met and became good friends with Tim Hudson and his girlfriend, Kim, who later became Hudson's wife.

When Ross transferred to the University of Florida after his sophomore year, Hyla transferred to Florida State University to study nursing. At the end of his junior year, Ross left college when he was drafted (seventh round) by the Los Angeles Dodgers. That's when the heartbreak occurred. Hyla broke up with Ross during his first year in the minor leagues.

"Her career and her identity was, and is, important to her," said Ross. "She was known as my girlfriend, and she lived with that for a while. I think she wanted to figure out who she was as a person, without me. I definitely believe that breaking up back then was hugely important to the relationship we have now."

He laughed and added, "I tell her I used to really love her until she broke up with me, now I just love her."

"It was a hard thing to do," said Hyla. "But I was trying to figure it all out."

She finished school and began working at Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville,

Fla., the same city where Ross was playing Double-A baseball. Hyla worked in the pediatric intensive care unit (P-ICU), a job she loved. But she loved David, too.

"I told my mom I missed David and wanted to see him, but I didn't know if someone else would be sitting in the stands," recalled Hyla. "He was my best friend, so I went to see him. As soon as we saw each other, we knew. And there wasn't anyone else in the stands."

As they re-kindled their relationship, Ross credits Hyla with helping him keep perspective during the sometimes difficult minor league days.

"I'd come home from a tough game, and she'd come home from working a shift in the P-ICU," he said. "I might have gone 0-for-4, and she'd come home and tell me she lost two babies, or a child was in a coma. It made me think, 'Okay, my life is pretty good.'"

In fall 2001, they visited Discovery Cove, an Orlando theme park that allows guests to swim with dolphins and other sea animals. As Hyla stood in the water, a dolphin carrying a buoy swam toward her. Written on the buoy was a marriage proposal: "Hyla, I love you. Will you marry me?"

The ring was brought over.

"I was so clueless I wore the ring on the wrong hand all day," said Hyla with a laugh.

Although she said "Yes," Hyla was still hesitant about following Ross from city to city. "I didn't want to live in his shadow," she said.

Finally, in 2005, they took the plunge and got married.

"I know waiting to get married made us stronger, in a way," Hyla said. "But I had to be okay with the lifestyle."

Sure enough, the first year they were married, Ross was traded from the Dodgers to the Pittsburgh Pirates on the last day of spring training. Hyla learned how to pack and move on her own.

"At one point (mid-2005) when David was in Indianapolis (Triple A, Pittsburgh), he was traded to San Diego," she said. "I was in Florida, David was in San Diego, our car was at the Indianapolis airport, and our home and belongings were in Pittsburgh."

Ross said Hyla took everything in stride.

"When she sets her mind to something, she just goes after it," he said. "Even now, with our kids, I know when I leave home, she's got it covered. There's not one thing that I have to think of when I come to the ballpark except for baseball, and that's the peace of mind I think everyone wants."

Their happiness became even greater when Landri and Cole entered the picture.

"We really do enjoy being parents," he

said. "Landri is just starting to understand 'off days.' She likes them because we get to play all day."

The Rosses just built a 4,000-square-foot home in Tallahassee near their families.

"It wouldn't be a dream house for some people, but it's pretty good for us," he said. "It's a ranch style, everything on one floor. We have a pool, which is a big deal since no one in our family ever had a pool. I foresee a lot of birthday parties around that pool!"

During this season, the Rosses live in a pretty three-story home rented from former Braves reliever Rafael Soriano, who's now with Tampa Bay.

"It was more house than we needed, but it turned out great with space for our parents when they come to visit, close to a great park for the kids and a swimming pool," said Ross. "Usually first thing in the morning, if I'm not playing that day, Landri and I are in the pool."

The contract extension gives them peace of mind, professionally and financially, but Hyla said the greatest joy is sharing the crazy baseball life with her best friend.

"He's living his dream," she said, watching Ross push Landri on a swing. "We get to raise two healthy, happy children. It doesn't get better than that."



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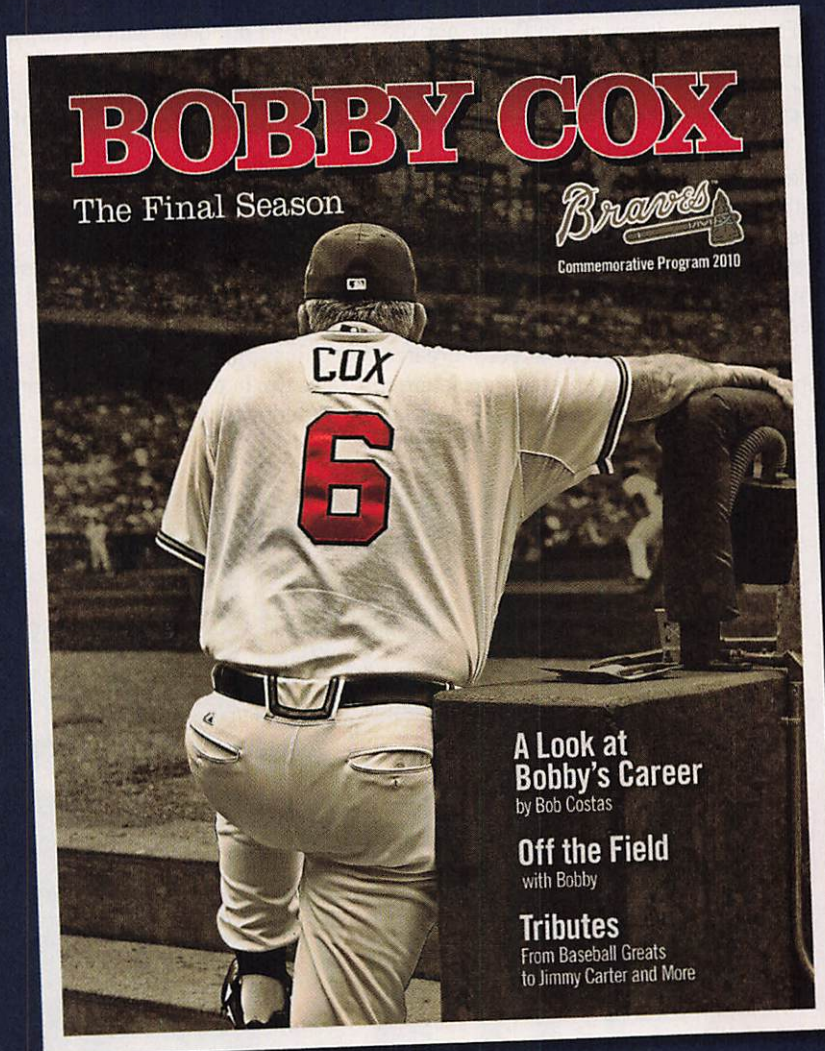
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BOBBY COX

COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM



-
- Feature article by Bob Costas
 - Bobby's life off the field
 - Tributes to Bobby from former and current players and coaches as well as Elton John, Tony LaRussa and President Jimmy Carter
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BY JAY BUSBEE

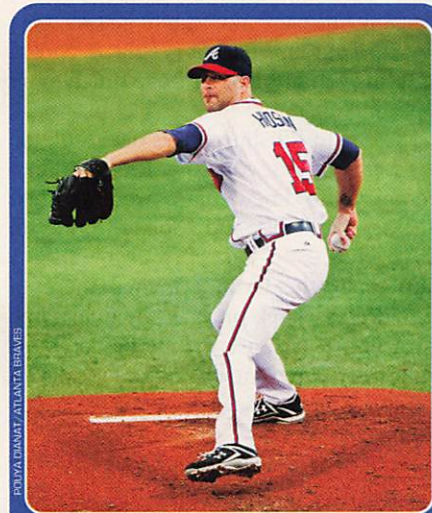


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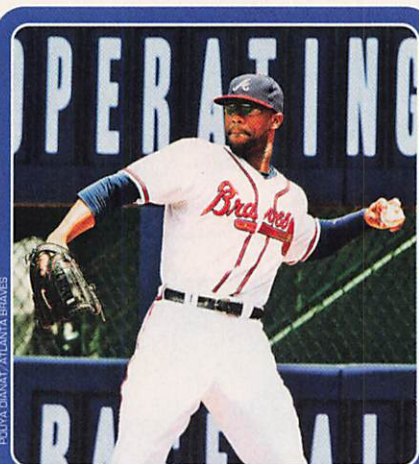
IF THE ALCHEMY that transforms 25 players of disparate skills into a winning ballclub were easy to master, every team would be in the hunt for October until the final day. Victory derives from a strange mix of personality, talent, attitude, drive and luck, and if even one of those elements is out of whack, the entire team can stumble and fall far short of the post-season.

For the last four seasons, we've seen teams clicking in one area but misfiring in another, playing hard but – standings don't lie – not as well as their 1990s/early 2000s counterparts.

All that's changed in 2010. Regardless of whether the Braves make the post-season, what's indisputable is that this team has the broadest collection of league-leading talent Atlanta's seen in nearly a decade. For the first time since the Braves' glory days, Atlanta has players in the conversation in almost every major award category in baseball. Let's run down a few of the more notable ones:



Cy Young: Tim Hudson. Huddy ranks top-10 in most major pitching categories (wins, ERA, quality starts, opponents' batting average). He's got some serious competition – Philadelphia's Roy Halladay and Colorado's Ubaldo Jimenez, to name two who could stake a claim to the award – but Hudson's 2010 has been the most dominant season by a Braves pitcher since the days of Smoltz/Glavine/Maddux.



Rookie of the Year: Jason Heyward. It's a testament to the strength of this year's National League rookie class that Heyward didn't clinch the award with his first swing in the majors, a three-run homer. Still, his fire and his talent put him right in the mix for an award previously won by recent Atlanta notables such as Bob Horner (1978), David Justice (1990) and Rafael Furcal (2000).

So, how much attention does Heyward give the possibility that he might be the RoY? "Zero. None. Not one bit," he said. "I'm here for my team. I'm here to win a World Series. Rookie of the Year, that's one year. A World Series trophy will last a lot longer than that."

Comeback Player of the Year: Hudson. Of all the awards on this list, this one's got to be the closest to a slam-dunk. Hudson missed major chunks of 2008 and 2009, but went undefeated in May and won NL Pitcher of the Month in August. Yeah, it's safe to say he's back.

MVP: Martin Prado. Sure, guys like Albert Pujols, Joey Votto and Carlos Gonzalez may have put up splashier numbers, but the Braves would not be where they are now without the glove and the bat of Prado. He's played extensively at two infield positions and batted all over the top third of the order, and he's found success everywhere he goes. "Most Valuable" doesn't necessarily mean "best," but many times, Prado's been both.

Batting title: Omar Infante. He's one of the hottest hitters in baseball, but because of his part-time status earlier in the year, he'll have trouble amassing enough plate appearances to qualify for the award. (A statistical quirk would let him count all at-bats he's short of the minimum as outs.) Plus, he's played almost every position on the field. Did he really dress as the Hammer in the Tool Race one night?

Okay, so those are the major awards. But let's open this up a little bit. Why not give a few more guys some recognition? It'd be just like Little League, where everybody gets a trophy! If we're tailoring awards to players, here's how I'd go:

The Johnny Bench Award for Excellence in Catching: Brian McCann. The finest power catcher in the game leads all his brethren in homers, RBIs, game-winning RBIs, doubles, and extra-base hits since 2006. And no offense to Mr. All-Star MVP, but with his speed, those last two stats may be the most impressive.

The Francisco Cabrera Award for Timely Hitting: Brooks Conrad. If I were Bobby Cox, I'd keep Conrad sequestered in a locked room during games, then tell him the game was on the line every time he came to the plate. Conrad's got a knack for turning defeat into victory, and Atlanta will need that icewater-in-the-veins cool in the pennant drive.

The Brett Favre Award for Retirement U-Turns: Billy Wagner. The travails of Atlanta closers both on the field (Wohlers 1996, Farnsworth 2005) and off (Rocker 1999) hit fans like a punch to the gut, which is why Wagner has been such a blessing – a seasoned closer just locking down the ninth, night after night. But just as Atlanta fans are getting accustomed to the veteran fireballer, he claims he's retiring, and nobody's changing his mind. Please, Billy? One more year?

We could go on, but the bottom of the page is rushing up fast. The hardware the Braves hang in their homes this off-season remains yet to be determined, but I'd be willing to bet they'd all give up their individual awards in exchange for that one big one.

A Wife's Pitch

BY CAROLYN LOWE



BASEBALL IS THE TIE THAT BINDS SO MANY

DURING THE BASEBALL SEASON, our house becomes known as Chateau Lowe. We are rarely, if ever, without houseguests.

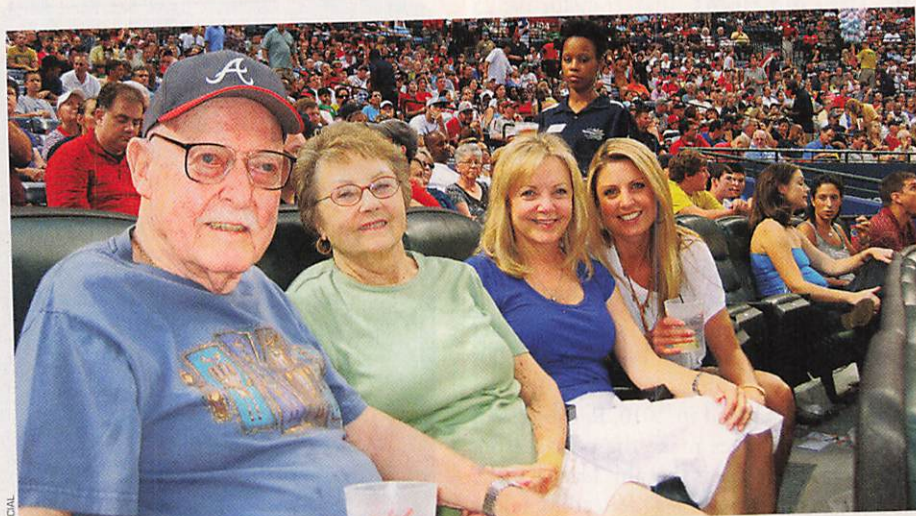
While I have to admit there are those rare times my family and friends make me want to pull my hair out (like when our niece Izzy painted our living room with red nail polish!), mostly I'm grateful to have the company. Which is a good thing, because when baseball takes us on the road, our friends and family follow!

At a game on the road last year, I ran into Matt Diaz's wife, Leslee, and introduced her to a friend I was with. She giggled at me as she jokingly asked, "Do you have friends in every city we go to?"

At the time, I responded with a sort of humble laugh of my own, "Yeah, I guess I do."

But now I've come to appreciate how truly lucky I am to be able to make that statement.

Unfortunately, it's really easy to get mired down in the day-to-day grind of the baseball season. While I've been busy planning all the travel, organizing all the details, and entertaining all our guests, the fun of the ride is passing me by. Only recently was I reminded of the thing about baseball, and sport in general, that I really love... its ability to bring people, even strangers, together. For me, baseball has been a facilitator of friendships. And for our family, a wonderful unifier.



Carolyn Lowe (R) with (R-L) her mother, Christine Deter, and her grandparents, Betty and Roy Furst, at Turner Field where 90-year-old Roy even got a little testy with the umpire.

On a recent flight to Pittsburgh, I had the good fortune of sitting next to a woman named Susan Olsen. She's lived in Pittsburgh her whole life. We struck up a conversation about her city and what was bringing me there.

This always starts a bit of a cat-and-mouse game for me. For some reason, I'm reluctant to blurt out, "My husband plays baseball." I guess the truth is it makes me feel as if I'm boasting. Turns out, Susan's godson plays for the Baltimore Orioles (outfielder/DH Nolan Reimold). Small world.

We chitchatted for most of the flight, and Susan asked if

I'd like to join her and her husband, Ray, later that day at the Rib Festival in downtown Pittsburgh. While my original plan of checking into the hotel and getting in a workout put up a minor fight, I agreed sampling ribs by the river was a much more appealing offer!

The day in Pittsburgh was beautiful, the ribs were without compare, I had my first pierogi (who knew there were mashed potatoes in there!), and I made wonderful new friends.

To repay the favor, I invited them to come watch Derek pitch in the final game of the series against the Pirates at PNC Park. Susan came and brought a friend who had never before been to a major league baseball game.

As it turned out, we had quite the visiting cheering section. Derek's dad, Don, our old friend, Pat Hammel, along with Derek's aunt and uncle, Barb and Tom Tannar, all drove from Michigan to watch the game.

Thankfully, Barb kept with her tradition of bringing homemade cookies. Every time the Braves scored, we all had to eat one. I couldn't have been happier when the Braves scored three runs in the first inning! But I'll admit, I felt pretty sick once the final tally reached nine in the 9-3 victory! I'm still undecided



Carolyn and Susan Olsen (photo at right) met on a flight from Atlanta to Pittsburgh, and Carolyn wound up attending the Pittsburgh Rib Festival (L) with her.



ed about whether it's a good thing Aunt Barb is bringing her cookies to Atlanta for the Cardinals series. Good for the Braves... bad for my waistline.

My grandparents, Roy and Betty, and my mom, Christine, made the trek from New Mexico and west Texas to stay with us in Atlanta this past month. My grandpa recently turned 90, and my grandma is 88 years young! They were in town for four games. We went to every one. Even my grandma, who I had never before seen watch a sporting event of any kind, refused to miss a game. My grandpa even appealed to the home plate umpire a time or two, with his polite call of, "Look 'em over, fella... look 'em over!"

How could The Blue not oblige?

Thanks to baseball, my grandpa has a renewed vitality. He has reason to wake up early and check the boxscore. He feels part of something. That is a rare gift.

So, it's scary to be faced with the realization that on any given day it could all be gone.

Our family, myself included, has come to take for granted that Derek will always pitch. It's not really our fault, because he always does. Every five days. Just like clockwork.

No one was more surprised than those of us closest to Derek when he was forced out of his August 29 start against Florida after three innings because of elbow pain. I've

never had to worry about Derek that way. I don't even know how.

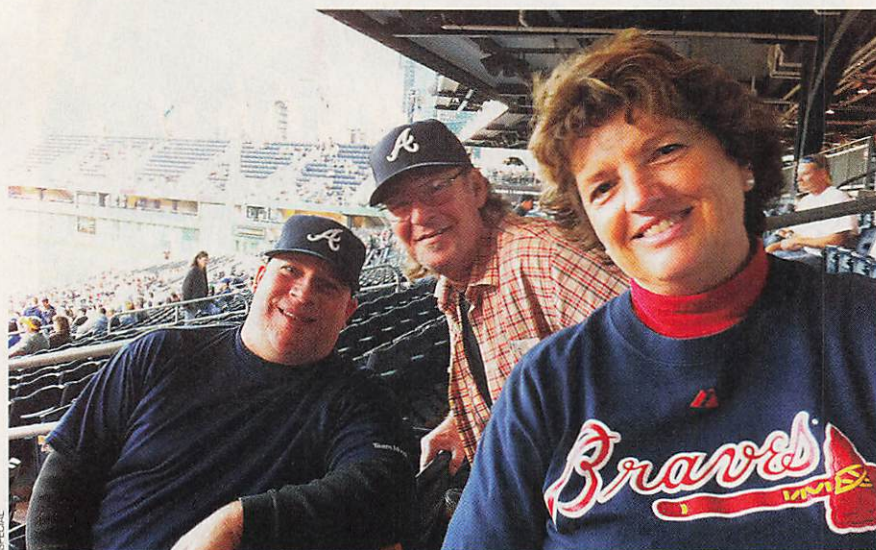
Don't misunderstand. I certainly knew Derek had been in pain. I saw him wince at the littlest things. I knew he couldn't play catch with his 6-year-old son, Tanner. I laughed when he had to ask me to open the pickle jar. But he's never had to miss a start until Sept. 3. That was a first in his career that includes more than 300 starts.

Hopefully, it will also be a last. Derek hasn't had pain in his elbow since making his Sept. 8 start in Pittsburgh. Even though the bone chip causing Derek trouble is still stuck in a bad place, with the extra days off, the Braves' medical staff can now control any swelling and discomfort with treatment. I pray it holds up through the remainder of the season and beyond.

Baseball has been a blessing to us in many ways, and Derek's recent health scare reminded me to appreciate the game before my husband's part in it is over. But even once it is, I'll be grateful for the people this game has brought into our lives, the people it continues to bring, and the bonds it strengthens.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Carolyn Lowe, the wife of Derek Lowe, is contributing a monthly column to ChopTalk throughout the season.



Derek Lowe's father, Don (center) with Pat Hammel (L), a long-time friend of Derek's, and Derek's aunt, Barb Tannar in Pittsburgh, where everyone OD-ed on Barb's cookies when the Braves scored nine runs.

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Hank Aaron, seated in front of award-winning actor Alec Baldwin, turns to talk to TV personality Star Jones during a tennis match at the U.S. Open.

CELEB COURT

HANK AARON attended the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament in Queens, N.Y., to receive the U.S. Tennis Association's "Breaking the Barriers" honor at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Sept. 7. It was the USTA's second annual reception to honor those who have made an impact through diversity and inclusion. Besides Aaron, other honorees were Judy Levering, past president of the USTA, and Ralph de la Vega, corporate and civic trailblazer. The hosts were Tony Harris from CNN and Betty Nguyen of the CBS Morning News. Four-time Grammy Award winner Deniece Williams performed. Just as impressive was the company Aaron kept later in the day when watching some tennis. He was seated directly in front of TV personality Star Jones and award-winning actor Alec Baldwin.



A-MAZE-ING

NO, IT'S NOT the latest crop circle - at least not one made by aliens. This one is strictly man-made as a tribute to Bobby Cox. Southern Belle Farm, located south of Turner Field in McDonough, created a cornfield maze featuring an image of the retiring Braves manager. The maze will be open on weekends through Nov. 14, on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sundays from 1-6 p.m.

Southern Belle says the correct pathways can be walked in under 30 minutes, but most visitors will require about an hour to travel through approximately five miles of twists and turns. General admission to the farm is \$12 per person (children ages 2 & under are free) and covers all fall activities, including the Bobby Cox maze. Visitors also can take a hay ride tour of the farm, pick wild-flowers or a pumpkin from the patch, watch the miniature pigs racing around Oinker Stadium,



pet the barnyard animals, take a shot with the corn cannon, play in the "Kiddie Korral," and ride the cow train.

Discounts are offered for senior citizens and groups of 25 or more. For more information or to make a group reservation, visit southernbellefarm.com or call (770) 288-2582.



ATLANTA BRAVES

THANKS, BOBBY!

A GROUP OF FANS headed by Scott Munn created a "Thanks Bobby" movement that includes specially designed t-shirts and bumper stickers that simply say, "Thanks Bobby." They can be ordered at thankbobby.com, and more information about the effort is on Facebook at Thanks-Bobby. T-shirts range in price from \$14-20, and bumper stickers are \$4.

The Braves have instituted special ticket prices for the Sept. 27-29 series against Florida and designated it the Bobby Cox Appreciation Series. Seats are just \$24 in the following sections: Henry Aaron (regular \$74), Dugout (reg. \$64), Terrace (reg. \$36), Club (reg. \$28), Field (reg. \$38) and Field Reserved (reg. \$28). Tickets are only \$12 in Pavilion (reg. \$28) and Outfield (reg. \$24). And Upper Box (reg. 12) and Upper Reserved (reg. \$8) are just \$6 each.

On Fan Appreciation Weekend, Oct. 1-3 against the Phillies, the Braves and their fans will continue to thank Cox for his great career, culminating in a special Bobby Cox Tribute on Saturday, Oct. 2. Game time has been changed to 4:10 p.m. due to coverage on FOX, and gates will open at 1 p.m. Fans are encouraged to be in their seats by 3 p.m. to witness the festivities.

HOW DO
THEY DO
THAT?

ORDER EQUIPMENT

WITH ALL THE PRESSURE to perform in the major leagues, Braves players need equipment that matches their exact specifications. The process to make that happen starts long before the season's first pitch.

Equipment falls into two basic categories: team issued and player issued. The Braves provide players with their uniforms, caps and helmets. They also buy the bats and balls. The team deals with about eight to 10 different bat companies. Every Brave has a custom bat made by one of them.

Most of the team's ordering takes place in the off-season. The equipment staff begins placing orders with several different companies in November. As shipments arrive, Braves equipment manager Ben Acree enters this information into a computer. A device similar to a grocery scanner helps track the supply. When the equipment staff gives something out, they scan a book with codes for each item, which then gets deducted from the computer inventory.

No matter how well the staff plans ahead, the supply of items like baseballs may run low during the season. So, they stay on top of the inventory and order more if necessary.

For player-issued equipment such as shoes, gloves, batting gloves and catching gear, individual Braves sign endorsement contracts with companies like Nike, Rawlings and Mizuno. Working through their agents, the players specify the exact styles and types they prefer.

"In spring training, we visit every camp," said Jim Guadagno, director of diamond sports promotions for Mizuno USA, which provides equipment for both Brian McCann and Chipper Jones. "So, we'll verify at that point that a player has all the products that he needs. I get in front of all the players and make sure they're happy with what they have."

During the season, Mizuno has a program that automatically ships equipment to the ballplayers once a month. If anybody needs something additional or different, they can adjust accordingly. The Braves equipment staff also stays in contact with company representatives to help players keep everything stocked.

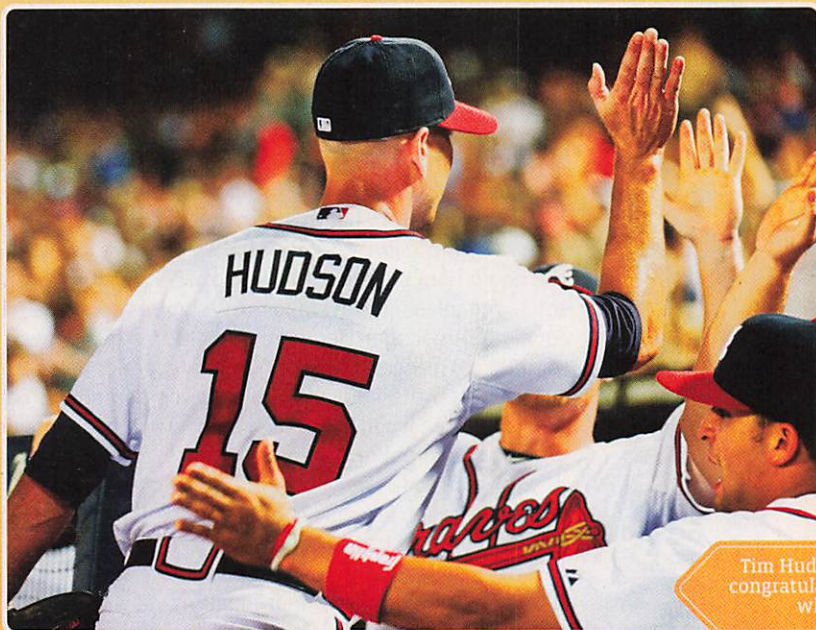
- STEVE FALL

UPDATES

- Former Braves minor league outfielder Dennis Dixon was the starting quarterback for the Pittsburgh Steelers in their season-opener Sept. 12. Dixon hit .176 in 28 rookie-level games in 2007 and decided to pursue football instead. He was a strong Heisman Trophy candidate at Oregon before an injury midway through his senior season. He was 18-for-26 passing for 236 yards in a 15-9 overtime victory against the Atlanta Falcons.

- Former Boston Beaneaters righthander the late Vive Lindaman (Feb. 2010 CT, "The Jacket That Time - And Family - Forgot") was honored in his hometown of Charles City, Iowa, Aug. 13. His family made a presentation of his warmup jacket and other memorabilia from his career to the Floyd County Museum. Lindaman remains the only Charles City native to play in the majors. Mayor Charles Erb read a proclamation declaring it "Vive Lindaman Day." Lindaman had a 36-40 record but a 2.92 ERA in four seasons for Boston (1906-09). His short career might be attributed to the fact that he pitched 32 complete games in his rookie season.

WHAT A MONTH



TIM HUDSON was named National League Pitcher of the Month for August after a month that created some **Cy Young** Award buzz for him. Hudson went 4-1 with a 1.71 ERA over six starts in August. He allowed one or no runs in five of those starts. He finished the month with a career-high 13 strikeouts in a 12-3 win over the Marlins Aug. 28. It was his sixth straight victory and raised his season record at Turner Field to 10-3. Hudson entered September with a 15-5 record and a 2.24 ERA. It was the second such award for Hudson. The first was in September 2000 when he pitched for Oakland.

Tim Hudson has been getting plenty of well-earned congratulations this season, especially during August, when he was NL Pitcher of the Month.

TRADE TIME

The Braves and Cubs completed a four-player trade Aug. 18 that brought first baseman **Derrek Lee** and cash considerations to Atlanta. The Cubs received minor league pitchers **Tyrelle Harris** and **Robinson Lopez**, both righthanders, and **Jeffrey Lorick**, a lefty. Lee, who is wearing uniform No. 27, is a three-time Gold Glove winner and two-time All-Star. He's in his 14th major league season and owns a .282 career batting average with 309 home runs and 995 RBIs in 1,790 games. In 109 games for the Cubs this season, he hit .251 with 16 home runs and 56 RBIs. He was batting .313 with six home runs and 20 RBIs in 24 games since the All-Star break. The 34-year-old Lee finished ninth in voting for the NL Most Valuable Player Award last season, when he hit .306 with 35 homers and 111 RBIs. In 2005, he finished third in the league's MVP voting and won the Silver Slugger Award when he led the league with a .335 batting average and hit 46 home runs with 107 RBIs. The 6-foot-5, 245-pound Lee was a member of the Marlins' 2003 World Series champions.

LOWE'S HIGH

Derek Lowe, who had to miss his Aug. 29 start due to pain caused by a bone chip in his elbow, bounced back strong and struck out a

career-high 12 in eight shutout innings against Washington Sept. 13 at Turner Field. In the fourth inning, he struck out **Ian Desmond** for the 1,500th strikeout of his career. Previously, the 37-year-old righthander had only two double-digit strikeout games in his career. The Braves won the game, 4-0. Lowe had a cortisone shot in the elbow to relieve the pain. An MRI showed the chip lodged in his elbow, but doctors said it did not threaten further damage if he pitched. Lowe's never been on the disabled list in his career.

TIME CHANGE

Because FOX picked up the Saturday, Oct. 2, game against the Phillies, game time at Turner Field has been changed to 4:10 p.m. That's the day that **Bobby Cox** will be honored in a pre-game ceremony, so the Braves have advised fans that the gates will open at 1 p.m., and people are asked to be in their seats by 3 p.m. Details about the ceremony were not available at press time.

THE BIG CALL

First base prospect **Freddie Freeman** led the list of minor leaguers called up to Atlanta when rosters could be expanded to as many as 40 players Sept. 1. Also promoted were

relievers **Mike Dunn** and **Scott Proctor**, catcher **J.C. Boscan** and righthander **Kenshin Kawakami**. In a procedural move, Kawakami was first optioned to Danville to open a roster spot for centerfielder **Nate McLouth**, who was recalled from Gwinnett Aug. 31. Kawakami joined the Braves the next day with the other callups.

TV HISTORY

Brian McCann hit his first career walk-off home run Aug. 29 to beat the Marlins, 7-6, at Turner Field. But everyone had to wait on instant replay before it was official. The ball was first ruled a double. However, the umpires checked the replay and quickly ruled the home run, seeing it struck the back wall and bounced back over the fence onto the playing field. It was the first time instant replay was used to determine a decisive home run. The Braves trailed Florida, 6-1, entering the eighth inning. They scored three in the eighth, and then **Matt Diaz** hit a two-run, pinch-hit homer in the ninth to tie it, leading to McCann's game winner.

ON THE MOVE

Martin Prado (finger) was activated from the disabled list Aug. 17, and **Brandon Hicks**



was optioned back to Gwinnett. The next day, Atlanta acquired **Derrek Lee** from the Cubs, and **Troy Glaus** (knee) was put on the disabled list to make room for him on the roster. Hicks was briefly recalled to give Lee time to join the team, then was sent back to Gwinnett Aug. 20 when Lee was activated. **Eric O'Flaherty** also came off the DL (mononucleosis) Aug. 20, and **Mike Dunn** was optioned back to Gwinnett. In need of bullpen help Aug. 27, the Braves optioned **Mike Minor** to Gulf Coast and called up **Craig Kimbrel** from Gwinnett. Kimbrel was optioned back to Gwinnett Aug. 29, and Minor was recalled. On Aug. 30, **Kenshin Kawakami** was called up from Gwinnett, and **Cristhian Martinez** was optioned to Gwinnett. Glaus was activated Sept. 2 from the DL. He played some third base, his old position, while rehabbing at Gwinnett. Kimbrel and Martinez were called up from Gwinnett Sept. 7.

SHORT HOPS

A Billy Wagner set the major league record for strikeouts by a left-handed reliever Aug. 27, with his 1,170th strikeout to pass **Jesse Orosco**.

A Mike Minor struck out 12 Cubs Aug. 22 to set the Atlanta rookie record, passing **Tommy Hanson's** 11 last year against the Giants. He equaled the franchise record held by **George Brunet** (1960) and **Bob Sadowski** (1963) in the Milwaukee era.

A Omar Infante was named National League Player of the Week for Aug. 16-22. In seven games, he hit .433. His .900 slugging percentage for the week, which included his first career two-home-run game, was tops in the NL. For more on Infante, see pages 22-25.

A Jason Heyward reached base in 10 consecutive plate appearances until grounding into a doubleplay Aug. 23 against Colorado. The streak included a 4-for-4 game against the Cubs Aug. 22 when he hit two home runs, walked twice, and drove in four runs.

A Prior to the Sept. 8 game at Pittsburgh, Pirates president **Frank Coonelly** and manager **John Russell** presented **Bobby Cox** with a \$5,000 check for his favorite charity, the Homeless Pets Foundation. It was Cox's last game as manager in Pittsburgh.

THE RACE IS STRESSFUL, BUT IT'S WHY WE DO IT

TO GET TO THIS POINT, where we're one game out of first with 17 games left to play, is gratifying for all the work that everyone has done to get to this point, and of course, it's also a very stressful time.

Every night, you watch your game and the other games that have an impact on our situation. It really comes down to pitch to pitch to pitch. That's how important everything is right now. But this is why we do what we do. We go to Florida for spring training with the hope that we'll be playing meaningful games once we get to September. This is what makes it fun!

I think our offense may be better balanced right now than it's been all season. The starting pitching in the last little stretch hasn't been quite as good as we've grown to expect, but I think Derek Lowe's performance last night (Sept. 13) might have turned that around.

Derek bounced back and really looked good. He had a little more life in his arm and a little more velocity and made better pitches. The cortisone shot (elbow) got him through the acute stage, and now he's able to go back and pitch. We don't know yet about whether or not the bone chip will need to be removed in the off-season.

Once we learned we were losing Chipper Jones for the rest of the year, and after watching the team for four or five more days, we felt we needed one more bat because we didn't have a legitimate third or fourth hitter outside of Brian McCann.

We needed more stability in the middle of the lineup. We were really happy to make the deal of getting Derrek Lee. We looked throughout baseball at all the players that had cleared waivers, and he really was the only one we felt comfortable with hitting in the middle of the lineup.

We feel he fits perfectly. He's a super defensive player, and he's super in the clubhouse. And Chipper told me a couple of days ago, "Derek's ready to pop loose." It looks like that might be happening.

Martin Prado and Jason Heyward are pretty good now in terms of the injuries they had. Off-season rest should take care of both of them.

I think what Omar Infante is accomplishing really shows the (All-Star) choice by Charlie Manuel was warranted. Those in our division knew how valuable he is. Now, based on the way he's playing every day, everyone else in baseball is seeing it.

It's fun to watch, and I don't know where we'd be without Omar. He's really stepped in when we needed someone due to injury, and now that he's playing every day, he's on the verge of possibly winning the batting title - which is incredible.

Nate McLouth is another example of what hard work and determination and stuffing your pride will do. It's a great story. When we decided to option him out six weeks ago, he took it in stride. He said he was going to go down and get his game together. He's done just that, and it's great to see.

It's hard to judge young guys, but Mike Minor has really impressed with what we've seen in his first full season. He has a real good idea for a young pitcher about how to use his stuff and how to pitch to good hitters. He has three good pitches. Once he settles in, he'll be a real good pitcher at the major league level.

Bobby Cox's great career is winding down, and I've got to believe there's a lot of emotion there for him. But thankfully, there's a lot of excitement around our games. Because of that, he's excited and energized every night. It's fun for him and the fans and everyone else.

NATE MCLOUTH IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF WHAT HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION AND STUFFING YOUR PRIDE WILL DO.



Chipper Jones, who's never played for any other big league manager except Bobby Cox, is among six players up for the Marvin Miller Man of the Year Award for his work off, as well as on, the field.

MAN OF THE YEAR?

CHIPPER JONES missed a major portion of the season due to a knee injury and surgery, but he's still in the running for the **Marvin Miller** Man of the Year Award presented by the MLB Players Association. Chipper is one of six players - one from each division - whose names are on the Players Choice ballot that players will use to vote for Man of the Year and other awards. He was nominated as the Braves' candidate by teammates, then was selected as the NL East contender by an internet vote of fans at mlbplayers.com. The other five candidates are **Jorge Posada** (Yankees), **Brandon Inge** (Detroit), **Torii Hunter** (Angels), **Albert Pujols** (St. Louis) and **Troy Tulowitzki** (Colorado). The award is given to the player that "inspires others to higher levels of achievement by their on-field performances and contributions to their communities." **John Smoltz** (2002 and '03) is the only Brave to win the honor since it was instituted in 1998.

Chipper has long been a supporter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. He serves as the chair of the Georgia chapter's 65 Roses Sports Committee and the "Bridges to a Cure" campaign, hosts children with cystic fibrosis at Turner Field, and frequently visits local hospitals. To date, Chipper has contributed over \$250,000 toward finding a cure for cystic fibrosis. In addition, the Chipper Jones Family Foundation supports the Boys & Girls Club, the Florida and Georgia Sheriff's Youth Ranches and Homes, the Atlanta Braves Community Affairs program and local Little League programs.

The Players Choice Awards also will honor the outstanding player, rookie, pitcher and comeback player in each league, as well as the overall Player of the Year.

McCANN'S THE MAN

Brian McCann is the Braves' nominee for the **Roberto Clemente** Award. McCann is one of the 30 club nominees who are finalists for the national award, which is given annually to the player who combines a dedication to giving back to the community with outstanding skills on the field. McCann and his wife, **Ashley**, were honored during an on-field pre-game ceremony on Sept. 9, where they presented a \$7,500 donation to **Dean Crowe**, executive director of the Rally Foundation for Childhood Cancer Research. The couple works diligently to raise awareness and funds for the Rally Foundation, a non-profit organization for childhood cancer research. As spokespeople for the Rally Foundation since 2008, Brian and Ashley have helped raise close to \$700,000 through events like the Rally Benefit Bash, the Brian McCann Rally Celebrity Softball Game, and the McCann 16 Home Run Challenge.

Previous Braves winners of the Clemente Award, originated in 1971, are **Phil Niekro** (1980), **Dale Murphy** (1988) and **John Smoltz** (2005). A panel of baseball representatives will select the winner who will be announced at the World Series. The player who receives the most votes online at mlb.com gets one vote in addition to those cast by the panel.

DIVISION SERIES TICKETS

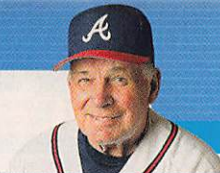
Tickets for the Braves National League Division Series are on sale. Division Series ticket prices range from \$15-\$80. For information, call (404) 577-9100. Tickets can be purchased at the Turner Field ticket office, braves.com/tickets, Ticketmaster charge by phone (800-745-3000), the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center, or at any Ticketmaster ticket center, including all Publix locations.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Braves open the 2011 season Thursday, Mar. 31 at Washington and after a seven-game road trip that also includes Milwaukee, they open at Turner Field Friday, April 8 at 7:30 p.m. against the Phillies. The schedule includes interleague play against the Angels (May 20-22 at Anaheim), Texas (June 17-19 in Atlanta), Toronto (June 20-22 at Turner Field), the Mariners (June 27-29 at Seattle), and Baltimore (July 1-3 in Atlanta). Once again, the season concludes with three games against the Phillies at Turner Field (Sept. 26-28). The Braves host Colorado on Monday, July 4, at 7 p.m. For the complete schedule, see page 39.

FOLLOW BOBBY

Bobby Cox will be the featured speaker at the 7th Annual Hot Stove Banquet & Silent Auction on Jan. 28 at the Holliday Alumni



Center on The Citadel campus in Charleston, S.C. The event is an annual collaboration between the Charleston RiverDogs and The Citadel. In addition to the banquet, a live auction will be held with proceeds going to The Citadel and to MUSC's Storm Eye Institute, the RiverDogs' primary charity. The reception begins at 6 p.m. with the dinner at 7 o'clock. Tickets are \$65 per person and include dinner, beverages and admission to the live auction. For individual tickets and information, contact the RiverDogs at (843) 577-3647. Tickets may also be purchased at riverdogs.com.

FOUNDATION GRANTS

The Atlanta Braves Foundation awarded grants to the following non-profit organizations prior to the Sept. 13 game: 100 Black Men of DeKalb, Atlanta Track Club, Camp Horizon, Inc., Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation, City of Refuge, Cool Girls, CURE Childhood Cancer, East Lake Foundation, Fragile Kids Foundation, Jack & Jill Late Stage Cancer Foundation, Jerusalem House, Kate's Club, L.E.A.D., Murphy-Harpest Children's Centers, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Raising Expectations, Renovación Conyugal, Inc., Special Olympics Georgia, The Auditory-Verbal Center, The Brian Jordan Back to the Future Foundation, The First Tee of Atlanta, Village of Carver Family YMCA, and Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. (Georgia CASA).

BALLS & STRIKES

A Online voting for the **Ford C. Frick** Award continues through Sept. 30 (5 p.m. Eastern) at facebook.com/baseballhall. Braves Hall of Famers **Skip Caray** and **Pete Van Wieren** are among the candidates. The top three fan selections will appear on the final 10-name ballot for the award. The winner will be selected by a 20-member electorate and will be announced at baseball's Winter Meetings in Orlando in December.

A The 28th Annual Hit 'Em for Hemophilia Golf Tournament, which always attracts a large contingent of Braves players, coaches, alumni and staff, is scheduled on Nov. 1 at Château Élan Winery and Resort in Braselton, Ga. Details are available online at hog.org/golf or by contacting **Vic McCarty** at (770) 518-8272 or vamccarty@hog.org.

WE'RE APPROACHING AN EXCITING ENDING

IT'S HARD DOING THIS COLUMN, because it's the middle of September, and I have to think about what's going to happen in October! But I can't predict where we'll be a month from now.

I know that we're all working toward making the playoffs. It's the reason we show up at spring training. When you're in a pennant race in September, you forget everything that went before you. You just have to get tunnel vision.

The best time of the year is September in a pennant race. It's the most stressful, the most fun, and it's great baseball going down the last month when you're right there, in the chase. It's nerve wracking, but it's fun.

We were in first place for a long time, 99 games from the end of May to the beginning of September, but I don't think our guys ever took it for granted or played with any less desire. This team wants to make the playoffs as badly as anyone sitting in the seats at Turner Field.

We have a great "makeup" team. That's not something you learn from coaches. "Makeup" is something you bring to the game. It's one of the reasons why the team has had so many come-from-behind wins. They don't give up. They pick each other up.

It's the hardest-working team we've ever had here. I really mean that. They really get after it. I told the team that the other day in a team meeting. And I reminded them that they can't stop working.

There are so many great things we can point to as keys to our success. The rotation is one of the huge reasons we are where we are as the season winds down. Even with some of our losses, like losing Kris Medlen and replacing him with Mike Minor, we're still in the top five in team ERA since the All-Star break. Minor is young and has to keep learning, but he's a good pitcher.

And we've had some guys really come on. One of our key bench players, Omar Infante, became a regular and became an All-Star in the process. Every time he comes up to bat, you expect him to get on base. In Martin Prado's second season as an everyday player he gave us great production. Both Infante and Prado were at the top in batting average.

Look at Jonny Venters and the year he's had. No one had heard of him when the season started. He could be in contention for Rookie of the Year. If this is actually Billy Wagner's last year, he's going to finish with some of the best stats he's ever had.

Tim Hudson is vying for a Cy Young Award after spending most of last year on the disabled list. Our bench has been so strong, right from the start. Eric Hinske was a good pickup for us, and Brooks Conrad has been spectacular.

We picked up Derrick Lee from Chicago, and he's been good - a Gold Glove at first base and he's driven in some runs. Having a veteran guy like him with his stature and leadership down the stretch, and hopefully in the playoffs, is huge. We've had a lot of great things happen.

Our fans played a role in our success. There was a lot of excitement generated from the first game, and I think that our home record says a lot about how well the team has responded to the fans' excitement.

A lot has been said about the six head-to-head matchups between us and the Phillies in September, but you can't just focus on six games. You play all the games hard, no matter who it is. You show up and play every single game like it's the most important game of the season, because that day, it is.

It could be a great ending for this team. They've worked so hard to get here.

IT'S THE HARDEST-WORKING TEAM WE'VE EVER HAD HERE. I REALLY MEAN THAT. THEY REALLY GET AFTER IT.



Minor, the Braves' No.-1 draft pick in 2009 (seventh overall), took over the role of fifth starter on Aug. 9, almost exactly one year after he signed (Aug. 6).

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: A lot has been made of the fact that you come from a small town. Just how small is Chapel Hill, Tennessee?

MIKE MINOR: There are two stop-lights, a Sonic drive-in, and three gas stations. Everybody hangs out at the Shell gas station.

CT: Hangs out to do...?

MINOR: Nothing. Just sit on the tailgate of the truck and talk. There are a lot of cows, horses, farms. A lot of the people in the community worked at the General Motors plant. For fun, we used to have a "field party," which was a field, a fire, and everybody hanging around - or we'd go to someone's house. In high school, we went to Franklin, Tenn., that had a mall, restaurants, a bowling alley and movies. It was about 30 minutes away.

CT: You're the sixth of seven children. What did you like about growing up in a big family?

MINOR: I feel like I matured pretty quickly. When I was younger, I looked up to my older brothers. I wanted to hang out with

them and felt like I was cool. I saw things, good and bad, that my older sibling did. My parents were always at work [at the GM plant], days or night, but usually on the same shift so they could see each other. But when they were gone, I was always with my brothers or sisters, because I was one of the younger ones. I got picked on a little bit.

CT: Do most of your siblings still live in that area?

MINOR: Most everyone lives in that area of Tennessee. I have a brother in Texas and one in Michigan. My youngest sister is a senior in high school and still lives at home. We're a blended family. My parents had me and my younger sister. My dad has two sons. My mom had the other three children. I had close relationships with all my brothers and sisters.

CT: Your nickname is "Spike." Where did that come from?

MINOR: My freshman year at Vanderbilt University, David Price [now a pitcher with the Tampa Bay Rays] used to call me "Mike the Spike." I guess because it rhymed and I used to wear my hair spiked up. I went from being called "Mikey," which is what all my family and close friends still call me. So, I

thought Spike was a cool nickname, but when I went to play X-Box, I needed a user name and Spike was already taken, so I went to "Spikezilla." Now my friends call me "Spikezilla," and that's how it all evolved.

CT: Why did you major in sociology?

MINOR: I didn't choose sociology to work in that field. It was the major with the classes that were most suited to the baseball schedule. I figured if baseball didn't work out, I'd have a Vanderbilt degree, and I could go somewhere and people would see that and know it wasn't easy, and I'd be more apt to be hired. The classes were always in the morning, so I had time to get to my classes and still be on the baseball field by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. A lot of guys were sociology majors for that reason. I could have studied human development, but there was a lot of paper writing, and I really didn't want to do that.

CT: What would you do if you weren't playing baseball?

MINOR: I don't know. I've always been around sports and I'm a competitor, so whenever anyone asks me that, I always say I'd do something competitive and I'd be good at it and make a lot of money because I wouldn't be lazy. I'd work a lot at something challenging that wouldn't stress me out.

CT: Were you a good student at Vanderbilt?

MINOR: Pretty good. I always got A's and B's in high school. If I got a 'B,' my parents would get upset. But when I got to Vanderbilt, I made B's and C's and they'd say, "Good job." It was a lot of work.

CT: Have you experienced a moment where you thought, "Wow. I'm in the major leagues"?

MINOR: I don't know if I've had that moment. It's still the same game. It's just a

bigger crowd. Every game I've pitched in this year, I've faced different hitters. It's the same thing here. The only thing is that sometimes I'm on the mound facing a hitter that I've looked up to as a kid. That's the coolest part. You don't realize it until after the game. My friends will text or call me and say, "Dude, you just struck out Pudge Rodriguez!" and I'm, like, "Wow. That's right." I've watched that guy for years, and I struck him out. Same thing with Alfonso Soriano. I thought, "Man, that guy is unbelievable," then I struck him out. But it's after the game... that's when I think, "Oh. That's cool." I'm still trying to establish myself. I'm on the team right now, but next year I have to make the team. Until I get a contract, I'm just meat. I don't know if I'm going to stay or not.

CT: Why did you go to college instead of signing with a pro team and playing in the minor leagues?

MINOR: I was in high school ranked fairly high for a pitcher, because I was left-handed, didn't throw that hard, I was upper 80s. I was a spot guy. In high school, I could hit all my spots, and I had a better change-up than I do now. They said, it was a major league changeup. I just didn't have a

breaking ball. I didn't throw hard, and I didn't have a third pitch, but I was still ranked in the third to fifth round. Tampa Bay was at my games, came to my house a couple of times. They told me they wanted me as a third pick. We talked about the money I'd get, but once you take away the part for taxes and paying your agent, there wouldn't have been much to live on in the minor leagues. And would it be enough for me to miss out on college? College could give me the opportunity to mature, develop as a person and as a player, get stronger, better. My dad didn't think it was worth it.

We told them an amount - it was less than a million dollars. I was pretty nervous when I told them, because at that time I

MINOR: I had to intentionally work on it for three years. I used to get really upset with umpires, coaches, other players. I still have to work on it. I still get really mad. Some people say they can't see it, but my dad can tell. In high school, even my freshman year, I would yell and scream.

CT: What brought about the change?

MINOR: My pitching coach would have us visualize things, slow the game down. What usually happens when you get upset is that everything starts speeding up on you. You want to just get the inning over with. What you need to do is just step off

I'M ON THE TEAM RIGHT NOW, BUT NEXT YEAR I HAVE TO MAKE THE TEAM. UNTIL I GET A CONTRACT, I'M JUST MEAT.

was pretty timid, weighed 175 pounds, was 6-foot-3. I was confident, but I knew I could be a lot better. They said they'd give me the amount we asked. My heart started racing, but I figured I'd just attack it and go after it. The draft came around. I acted like it was a normal day. I didn't want to get too excited about it, because they had been off and on. I didn't know whether to trust them or not. The end of the story is, we waited the whole summer and nothing ever happened. No explanation. We were pretty mad. We fired the agent and didn't talk to Tampa Bay for three years. I saw the same scout while I was at Vandy, but I never spoke to him. When my third year came around, the scouts came in and he told me what went on from their side and how they didn't want to give me above slot money because the upper level guys hadn't seen me. I just told him that was fine, I was over it, but you're not going to get me now. I thanked him for not drafting me earlier, because I bettered my chances by getting bigger, stronger, more experience at college.

CT: Many people, including Roger McDowell and Bobby Cox, have complimented your composure on the mound. Is that something you intentionally worked on?

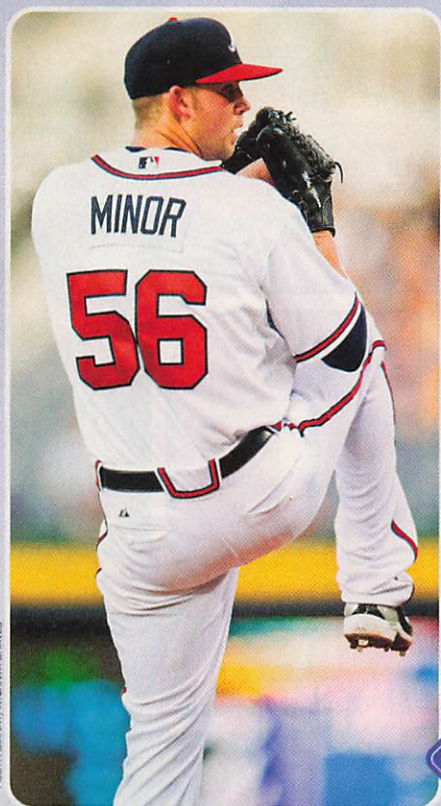
the mound and give yourself a couple deep breaths, then get back on the mound and think, "What am I going to do here? What pitch am I throwing? Where? What's the situation?" A lot of young pitchers just get out there and throw the ball whatever the catcher puts down instead of thinking about why they're doing it. I still use the technique.

CT: Did that same control carry over to your personal life as well?

MINOR: I think so. This past year, I've been a lot calmer, not getting mad over stupid things. This off-season I hung out with my trainer, Jerry Ingle, a lot. He's been great for me and really knew what he was talking about. I got a lot bigger and stronger and was ready for spring training and the whole year. But just hanging around him has influenced me.

CT: Did you have a pitching influence? Someone who you watched or admired?

MINOR: Not really. When I was younger, I was always playing games, so by the time I was at home, I watched SportsCenter. I liked watching the recaps and the top plays and top pitching performances. I trusted my pitching coaches and listened to them. I was told I had good mechanics and just trusted my own stuff.



POLYA DANAY/ATLANTA BRAVES

In his third start, Aug. 22 at Chicago, Minor struck out 12 Cubs to set an Atlanta rookie record and tie the franchise rookie record.

**Infante's Courage, Pride And Confidence
Lead To An All-Star Selection And Batting Title Contention**



OMAR
THE MAGNIFICENT

IMAGINE "ALL-STAR" and "batting title contender" being used to describe Omar Infante as recently as, say, at breakfast on the Fourth of July. Preposterous!

Oh, how perceptions of Omar The Magnificent changed over the next two months. Not only did he become a member of the National League All-Star team on Independence Day, but also over the next two months, the previously unsung utilityman became an everyday player, sparked the Braves' post-season drive from the leadoff spot in the batting order, and most amazingly, vaulted himself into position to possibly win the NL batting title.

Truth, indeed, can be stranger than fiction. Of all the unlikely storylines throughout Major League Baseball this season, it would be difficult to make an argument that any was as unpredictable as this 28-year-old role player with a .264 career batting average suddenly becoming an All-Star and possibly the batting champ.

Infante's rise to prominence is a testament to his courage and pride and the confidence he's always had that he was a better player than he was credited with being. In 2004, he took advantage of an injury to a teammate (Fernando Vina) to become Detroit's regular second baseman for the rest of the year. He responded by hitting .264 with 16 home runs and 55 RBIs. He held the starting job at Detroit the following spring but soon lost it when the Tigers acquired Placido Polanco from the Phillies. He'd been pigeonholed as a role player ever since, or at least until the Braves lost Chipper Jones to injury Aug. 10 and suddenly needed an infielder.

Infante answered the call in a way that surprised everyone, perhaps even himself. However, ChopTalk readers might remember that he told everyone he was good enough to be a regular when the Braves acquired him from Detroit, along with lefty reliever Will Ohman, on Dec. 4, 2007, in exchange for righthander Jose Ascanio, who's yet to make an impact and is now on the Pirates' disabled list.

At the time, Frank Wren called Infante a "super utilityman," which he has proven to be. But Infante would have none of that. In the February 2008 issue of ChopTalk, Infante made his case, saying, "I don't consider myself a backup. I can play every day."

Was anyone listening? If so, they probably weren't taking him seriously. But the fact is that Infante has done nothing but deliver on that promise ever since he put on a Braves uniform. Only having his left hand broken twice by pitches held him back in his first two years in Atlanta.

Still, as good as he's been for the Braves in a reserve role - hitting .293 in 2008 after a late start caused by his first broken hand in winter ball in his native Venezuela and then .305 last year in spite of missing May 21-Aug. 11 with the same injury - this year's performance never could have been scripted, except by those who dabble in fiction.

Since his surprise selection for the National League All-Star team by Phillies manager Charlie Manuel, it seems Infante has been on a mission to prove the nay-sayers wrong. Manuel was crit-

icized and ridiculed by the media and fans for choosing Infante, even though the new All-Star Game "re-entry" rule made the selection of such a versatile player a reasonable decision.

At this writing, Infante was hitting a league-best .341 and he compiled a career-high 14-game hitting streak - during which he batted .410 - that was snapped Aug. 27. He was named National League Player of the Week Aug. 16-22, after a seven-day stretch in which he hit .433 with three home runs, and led the league in slugging percentage (.900) and runs (9). He ended the week with an exclamation point, going 4-for-4, with two home runs, four RBIs and four runs in a 16-5 clobbering of the Cubs in Chicago.



When Chipper Jones was lost for the year with a knee injury Aug. 10, Prado became the regular leadoff hitter and second baseman, allowing Martin Prado to move to third base and the No. 3 slot in the batting order.



Infante, generously listed at 6-feet, 180 pounds, had reached base in 41 of 43 games since July 29, hitting .361 (66-for-183) with 22 multi-hit games. As a leadoff hitter in 47 games, he's batted .338 (69-for-204).

Infante's most remarkable stats are his production against right-handed pitchers and when batting with runners in scoring position (RISP). His .363 average against righthanders is the best in the majors (minimum 225 at-bats). Remember, this is a right-handed batter who's twice had his left hand broken by errant pitches.

And in his last four seasons, from his final year in Detroit through mid-September this year, Infante's hitting .354 (102-for-288) with runners in scoring position. That's also tops in the majors (minimum 285 at-bats with RISP).

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"I guess all the commentaries that I didn't deserve to be picked [for the All-Star team] were extra motivation," Infante said in his usual understated fashion.

Infante's shot at winning the NL batting crown hinges not only on his performance over the last three weeks of the season, but also on how many plate appearances he gets. He needs to average about 4.3 plate appearances per game - assuming no off days - in order to get the required 502 plate appearances. However, even if he falls short of 502 (3.1 per team game), he could still win if he's far enough ahead of the field to factor in hitless at-bats for any plate appearances he's shy of 502.

This is not without precedent. In fact Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn won the batting title in 1996 when he had 498 plate appearances. When an 0-for-4 was added to give him 502, he still won the title. Pittsburgh's Bill Madlock won in similar fashion in 1981.

Not surprisingly, Infante avoids being drawn into such hypotheticals, no matter how tantalizing. But he admits being happy to have the leadoff position, which helps maximize at-bats. If he does win, it would be reminiscent of his early days playing baseball. He described one year, in Venezuela's youth league, in which he won no fewer than seven individual titles.

"Hitting champion, doubles champion, RBIs, slugging, MVP..." he said, struggling to remember them all. "All but home runs. They gave that to someone else."

Infante grew up in Guanta, Venezuela, a gritty seaside town about a hundred miles east of the capital Caracas. Guanta is best known for its massive seaports, and the equally imposing cement factories and oil refineries that supply the ports and ocean liners most of their cargo. Infante started playing baseball at age four in a run-down field adjacent to the town's central square, always accompanied by his older brother, Asdrubal.

Omar was called "Nene" then - "Baby boy" in Spanish - but "only by my brother and close friends," he adds, a thinly veiled warning to anyone tempted to be too familiar.

Infante's father was an accomplished amateur pelotero (ballplayer) who would take Omar and Asdrubal to games. The elder Infante never missed a chance to school his sons on baseball fundamentals.

"He always said not to have too long of a swing," Infante recalled. "To use your wrists, and try to hit line drives. Just make contact, that was most important."

By age 14, Omar and Asdrubal began to think seriously about pursuing baseball



professionally. A friend of their father's was a recruiter for Colorado, and Omar spent four months at the Rockies' academy, though he didn't sign. Asdrubal signed with the Tigers as a right-handed pitcher in 1998, and Omar followed a year later. In 1999, the brothers played together for Detroit's rookie team in the Gulf Coast League, a dream-come-true for the entire family. It could hardly be a better story - two baseball-loving brothers rising above difficult circumstances with the help of a dedicated father to play side by side in the United States.

But the story didn't end that way.

Even before the brothers signed with the Tigers, their father was seriously ill with kidney disease. In fact, the Tigers helped arrange for the elder Infante to receive advanced treatment in the United States, though his condition remained tenuous (he died in 2000). In December of 1999, after the brothers' first year together in Detroit's farm system, Asdrubal was murdered while home

Capable of playing any position other than pitcher and catcher, Infante wears a protective pad on his left hand when hitting because it's been broken twice by pitches.

in Venezuela for the off-season. Suddenly, Omar was faced with playing ball and supporting his family on his own.

"My mother didn't want me to keep playing," he said. "But I told her, 'I have

to do it.' It's difficult to be away from your family, but it's one of the sacrifices you make to play baseball."

Martín Prado, a fellow Venezuelan, has been one of Infante's closest confidants since being traded to Atlanta. He's the godfather of Omar's 15-month-old son, and understands better than most what Infante has been through.

"Considering how he has risen above everything, all the things that have happened to him and his family, to have the mental strength to continue on, it's very admirable," Prado said.

It wasn't easy at first.

Reeling from the deaths in his family and



adjusting to life in a new country, Infante had a see-saw tenure with the Tigers. He was called up from the minors in 2003, only to be demoted at mid-season. He was called up again in 2004 when he played in a career-high 142 games. But he couldn't repeat the act in 2005, and he found himself back on the bench.

Ironically, it was on the bench that Infante finally hit his stride. He played seven different positions in 2007, and by the time he came to Atlanta, Infante had quietly become one of the best utility players in the game, someone who could play short-stop as easily as center field.

Indeed, despite all the attention Infante's hitting gets, it's his versatility in the field that's often mentioned first. So far this season, he has played at five different positions - second, short, third, right field and left field.

"It's not easy to find guys who can play all those positions that good," said bench coach Chino Cadahia. "It gives a manager a lot of flexibility."

For his part, Bobby Cox described Infante as "the world's greatest utility player."

Even from that perspective, it was surprising to everyone - in spite of the new re-entry rule - when Manuel named Infante to the All-Star team. That includes Infante himself.

The news came in an early-morning phone call from GM Frank Wren.

At first, Infante, whose English is very limited, thought he was being traded.

"When I told my wife (Yohanna) I'd been picked for the All-Stars, she didn't believe me," Infante recalled with a smile. "We called a friend who works at the stadium and speaks Spanish, and she said it was true."

Even Terry Pendleton said he was "shocked" by the pick. Not because of any doubts about Infante's skills, but because utility players are routinely overlooked. Pendleton has seen Infante blossom in his new role as an everyday player, and Infante's teammates know he has the skills to continue as a regular.

What's not clear is if there's a position for him to take.

"Whatever the manager says, I will always accept," said the diplomatic Infante, who is only signed through this season. "Next season, Chipper Jones should be back. I don't know what's going to happen. I just want an opportunity [to play], that's the most important thing."

It could be said that Infante has outgrown the utility role - or else he's redefining it.

RELAXING, REACTING HELPED ME GET HOT

I FOUND OUT THAT (roommate) Freddie (Freeman) was called up the night he found out, August 30. I got home after our game against the Mets, and he found out that night after his game at Gwinnett.

I told him, "Congratulations!" I also told him, "You have the day off on Tuesday. You need to enjoy that with your family and girlfriend, and I'll see you at the stadium on Wednesday."

He was in the lineup the first day, and I was just so happy for him. Any time a friend achieves a goal they set in their life is awesome, whether it's in baseball or whatever. Now that we're playing together again that's cool, and it was good for him to get some at-bats that first night. I don't think he was expecting to start. He was in the lineup because he can help us win.

I would say that the hot streak I've been on happened because I'm just reacting, not trying to do too much at the plate. I will say it's a lot easier to hit when you've got a guy getting on base ahead of you as much as Omar Infante has, and Martin Prado before him.

I'm really comfortable with the role I have, hitting in the two-hole, just coming to the field every day knowing that's where I'm going to be.

We've had a bunch of late-inning wins, and it's always nicer to have a lead early, going into the eighth or ninth innings, especially at home. But at the same time, that's part of the game. You can't ever give up. You can't ever let up. That's the difference between winning a game here or there in the division race.

It's been great to pull off those kind of wins, because that means the bullpen is hanging in there, getting the job done, keeping us in the game, and the hitters are scrapping out runs in the late innings.

It's really rewarding when you hang in a long time in a game and get the win. It's definitely more intense, more mentally draining. We want to win every game possible, and every game is possible. So, it's awesome to get wins like that because it builds momentum into the next day, the next game.

Coming into the end of my rookie season, I think one thing I've taken away from watching Bobby Cox is that from the top of the organization, to the manager, coaches and players, they want you to respect the game. They expect you to hustle and to work at the game, try to improve.

They understand that errors are going to happen, that mental things are going to happen. That's all part of the game and the long season, but they expect you to go out every day and make an effort to improve.

It's the way Bobby goes about his business. He understands we're trying to do well, not just for us but for him.

I've felt like a full-fledged part of the team since the first time I played for him at spring training. That's how he makes everyone feel, every player off the bench, every pitcher that comes in.

I still can't point out a moment that sticks out as my favorite moment of the season. I can probably tell you in December after I'm able to look back and reflect over the entire season. I'm sure I'll look at moments and say, "That's something I'll remember the rest of my life."

Our fans have been good. They have the kind of energy and excitement because they've seen us play well and know what they can expect and what we can do.

It's been impressive to see how the fans came out to watch. I know the last few weeks of the season will be intense, fun, and what the game is made of. That's what it's all about.

**"I'M REALLY
COMFORTABLE WITH
THE ROLE I HAVE, HITTING
IN THE TWO-HOLE..."**

HOW A TEAM LACKING IN STAR POWER
BUT FLUSH WITH PITCHING
FORGED INTO CONTENTION

THE WILL TO WIN

BY JON COOPER



It's difficult to put a label on the 2010 Braves. The more you watch them, the more this team grows on you. They're the little mutt that works its way into your heart by trying harder and being more fun than the more glamorous show dogs.

"The Team That Never Gives Up," "The Team That Fights to the End," offered Brian McCann when asked to come up with a nickname for the team.

Neither of those rolls off the tongue like "The Baby Braves" of 2005, of which McCann was a key part, or "The Miracle Braves," a moniker that has been taken since 1914. But this team is special.

The season, which already had "special" written on it because it is Bobby Cox's final season, has become noteworthy for much more.

Just "how much more" will be determined as the season winds down. At press time, however, bringing post-season play back to Turner Field for the first time since 2005 was a distinct possibility, since the Braves and Phillies were battling for the NL East lead.

If the team advances - either by winning the division or the wild card - it would be especially sweet for McCann, a local product who hasn't been in the playoffs since his initial season with the "Baby Braves." Because he grew up watching Cox's teams dominate the division and the league in the 1990s, he would like to see it come full circle, with Cox making one last championship run.

"[Cox] was a big reason the Braves had 14 consecutive division titles," said McCann. "I know he wants to get back there, and we want to send him out a winner."

In pursuit of that goal, the Braves pushed the limits of what is possible despite a lineup that, on paper, didn't necessarily scream "contender."

"We said in spring training, 'We're not sexy, we're solid,'" said Matt Diaz. "It's just a testament to our depth. The later the game goes, the more the bench is used, the more the bullpen is used. We feel that's where we can get teams that on paper may throw a better starting eight out there."

"This is the best clubhouse I've ever been in, as far as guys," McCann added in agreement. "Everybody gets along, everybody jokes around. We go out to dinner on the road, and we have 15 guys going. You don't see that on probably any [other] team. It's a great bunch of guys, and I hope we can do something special."

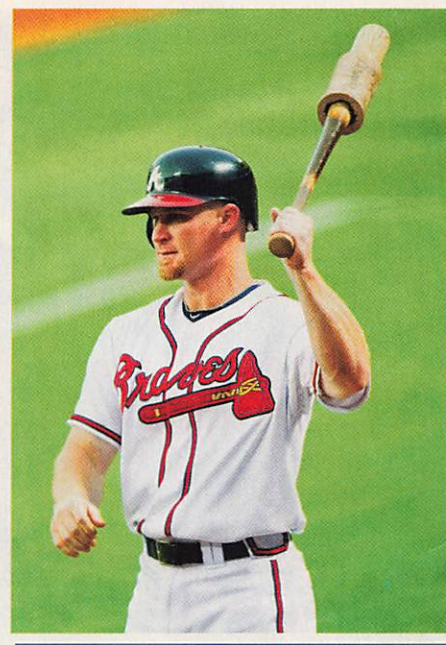
Doing something special requires a special group and special chemistry. That's this year's Braves, who consider themselves as much of a family as a team.

"Everybody's nice to everybody. Nobody is bigger than the team," said Martin Prado, who was among NL leaders in hits and batting average and major league leaders in multi-hit games and home batting average, while batting leadoff and then third when Chipper Jones was lost for the final 49 games of the season.

Surprisingly, the team's chemistry - and its bid for NL East supremacy - didn't take the expected hits from losing Jones and Kris Medlen, who stepped into Kenshin Kawakami's spot in the rotation by going 5-0 with a 3.86 ERA in 14 starts (Atlanta was 13-1 in those games), only to be lost for the year to elbow surgery. The Braves also missed Jurrjens for two months early in the year and Prado for a couple of weeks.



Brian McCann hit his first career game-ending home run Aug. 29 against Florida, and it also was the majors' first game-ending home run determined by instant replay.



The Braves had 23 last-at-bat victories at press time, with four of those coming via walkoff home runs by Troy Glaus (facing page), Brooks Conrad (above), Brian McCann (below) and Nate McLouth.

Credit for the never-ending production pool goes to GM Frank Wren and his ability to find quality replacements on the fly. Wren also improved chemistry by trading enigmatic shortstop Yunel Escobar for Alex Gonzalez, a pro's pro, and brought in business-like veterans Rick Ankiel and Kyle Farnsworth from Kansas City, as well as first baseman Derrek Lee from the Cubs.

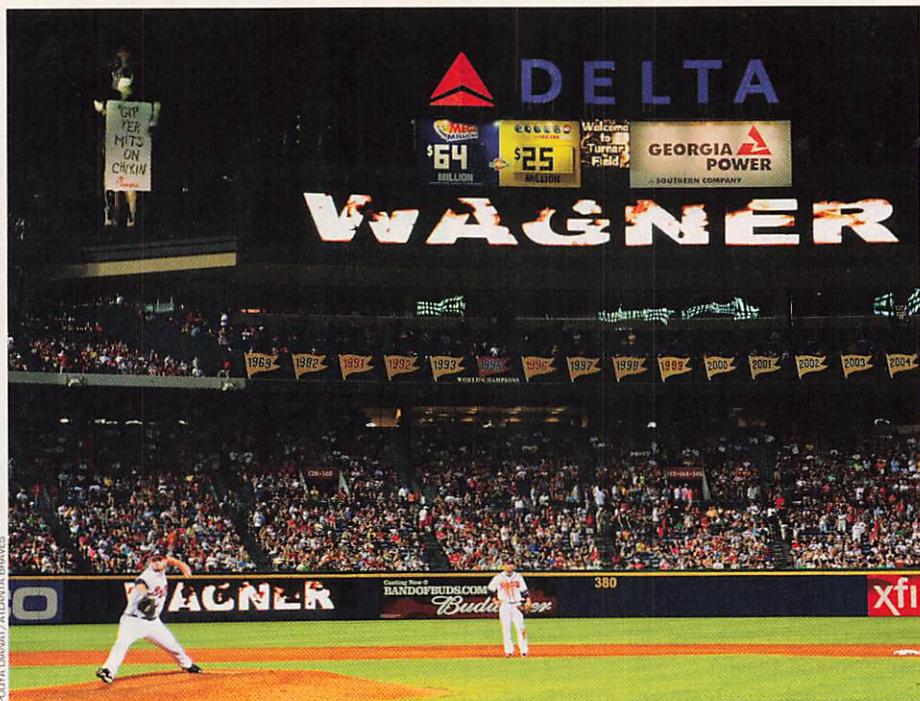
"We've had a lot of injuries, and I think the GM has done a great job of keeping a deep club," said Hinske, one of Wren's versatile off-season pickups. "We've got guys that can play different positions and fill in when we do have an injury. You never want people to get hurt, but you have to keep going no matter what happens. It takes 25 to win. We go out there with the nine that are in the lineup and do the best we can to win that day."

But there has been consistent leadership.

"There are leaders like [Billy] Wagner and Mac [McCann]," said Prado. "They're just great guys, and they inspire other guys to be part of the team and play together as a team."

The Braves even had something of a team get-together at the All-Star Game. The team had five All-Stars, including three first-timers - Prado, Omar Infante and rookie sensation Jason Heyward - along with ace Tim Hudson, who spent most of

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Billy Wagner gives the Braves dependability at closer, as well as a veteran leadership presence in the clubhouse.

2009 rehabbing from Tommy John surgery, and McCann, whose first All-Star Game hit (a seventh-inning, three-run double) earned him MVP honors and the NL home field advantage in the World Series. Wagner also turned down the chance to be a replacement player on the team.

That home field advantage might bear fruit down the road, because heading into September, the Braves boasted the best home record in the majors, at 48-18 (a .727 winning percentage), and had lost only one home series all season, back in April.

The way the Braves won some of those home games made the season even more special. Heading into the season's final month, Atlanta led the National League with 41 come-from-behind wins and led the majors with 242 runs after the seventh inning and 23 last-at-bat victories.

"We play hard until the end, and we believe until the end of the game that we can win it," said Brooks Conrad, whose first seven homers came after the seventh inning, four of them with the team trailing or tied.

"That's why you've seen the last at-bat wins, because we believe in that and we play hard and expect to win every day. We'd rather have some larger margins of victory, but we're having a lot of fun."

"It's fun to be able to battle and have that pay off," agreed Heyward, who entered September with five game-ending RBIs. "You go through a season with injuries, you go through a season with trades, and the ups and downs of losing streaks and winning

streaks, and just to be able to say we hung in there and accomplished the win is huge."

"The hitters seem to never want to give up. That's a mentality that you can't teach," added Peter Moylan. "When we had a couple of walk-off wins early in the season, you have that thought in the back of your head

POST-SEASON DROUGHT

Year	Record	Pct.	Finish	GB
2006	79-83	.488	3	-18
2007	84-78	.519	3	-5
2008	72-90	.444	4	-20
2009	86-76	.531	3	-6

that you can always do it. It's just an attitude that we've got that no game is finished until that 27th out is made. We've got confidence in each other to know that if you don't get the job done, someone behind you is going to get the job done."

Watching to see who would be the one to get it done added to the fun. Like a real-life version of the "cap shuffle" scoreboard game, where a ball is hidden under a cap and fans are challenged to follow it during a series of rapid movements, opponents never knew which Brave was under the hero's cap.

"You've got to have guys coming up with big hits or guys pitching big innings, just everybody pitching in," added Wagner. "That's how it's been all year long. There's

not one guy in here that you'd say carries the team or is the superstar. There are 25 superstars on this team. We have a lot of fun, and we enjoy competing."

That fighting spirit was evident from the first inning of the first game. After the Cubs jumped out to a 3-0 lead on Opening Day, the Braves roared back with six runs, capped by Heyward's mammoth 476-foot, three-run blast on his first major league swing. They won the game, 16-5, and perhaps forged a mind-set for the season.

Trumping that comeback was the one on May 20 against the Reds, when the Braves headed into the ninth trailing Cincinnati, 9-3. The Braves chipped away, setting the stage for the beginning of the legend of Brooks Conrad. With the bases loaded and one out, down 9-6, Conrad smacked a 2-2 pitch from Reds closer Francisco Cordero to deep left field. Reds leftfielder Laynce Nix leaped for it and knocked it over the wall for a game-winning grand slam and a 10-9 win. Conrad made the sports highlight shows by starting back toward the dugout holding his head, thinking the ball was caught, then, realizing it wasn't, sprinting around the bases to celebrate with his waiting teammates.

Another great example came on Aug. 29, when Atlanta trailed Florida, 6-1, after seven innings, but took advantage of the Marlins' bullpen once starter Josh Johnson was pulled. The Braves, held to three hits over seven innings, put together back-to-back three-run innings to win, 7-6. A poor throw allowed two runs to score in the eighth, then a two-run homer by Diaz and a walk-off homer by McCann in the ninth, the first of his career and the first in major league history decided by instant replay, brought Atlanta all the way back.

The season's most bizarre celebration came on April 20, when the team abandoned the dugout as McLouth circled the bases on his walk-off homer against Philadelphia, forcing the centerfielder to touch a vacant home plate, go through an empty dugout, and head toward the locker room to find teammates with whom to celebrate.

The Braves' pitching staff, however, was easier on the nerves. The staff ranked in or near the top five in ERA, innings, runs, walks, hits and opposing batting average.

Hudson, who missed the end of 2008 and most of 2009 after Tommy John surgery, stepped forward as a bona fide Cy Young



candidate. Jair Jurrjens may have missed more than two months with a left hamstring strain, but he came back and resumed the form that made him the team's leading winner two seasons ago. Derek Lowe recorded his ninth straight double-digit-win season, fighting a bone chip in his elbow that caused him to miss his first career start.

Second-year righty Tommy Hanson battled but came up big down the stretch. And after Medlen, went down, 2009 first-round pick Mike Minor came up and carried his weight.

"They're the reason we're [in first place]," said Hinske. "Pretty much when we lose, we lose because we don't score runs. They usually hold the opposing team under three or four runs every night. So, if we go out there and score some runs, we're going to be fine."

Hinske's theory is borne out by the Braves' 65-17 record when scoring four or more runs (they were 49-3 when scoring more than four) heading into September.

The starters' effectiveness allowed the bullpen to flourish. It was in the top five in the NL in ERA and opposing batting average, while ranking in the bottom five in innings pitched.

The 'pen got expected dependability from Wagner, who recorded his 400th save on June 25, and setup man Takashi Saito, as well as stalwarts Peter Moylan and Eric O'Flaherty. But the feel-good story of the group was Jonny Venters. The 25-year-old hard-throwing lefty ranked among major league rookie leaders in appearances, innings, ERA, strikeouts, opposing batting average, and holds.

"I thought going into spring I'd get a September callup if I was lucky," said Venters, a 30th-round pick of the Braves in 2003. "It's crazy. Sometimes I walk out on the field like, 'Man, I'm in the big leagues.'"

As the weather began to cool, the Braves hoped to finish hot and ride the momentum that carried them to a major-league-best 69-41 record since May 1, when they were in last place, five games out of first. On May 31, they moved into first place by beating the Phillies, 9-3, and they held the lead for more than three months before relinquishing it Sept. 7.

A World Series championship would be a nice caper for this thrill ride, but that's further ahead than the Braves are looking.

"We all know it's Bobby's last year, and we'd love to win the World Series for him. But we're not coming in the clubhouse every day and talking about it," said Hinske. "We're just trying to win today. That's it."

COULD OZZIE GUILLEN BOLT CHISOX FOR FISH?

SCOUTS WERE BUZZING in mid-September that former Braves infielder **Ozzie Guillen** (1998-99) could leave the White Sox for the Marlins. Guillen lives in Miami and was the Marlins' third-base coach when they won the World Series in 2003. Still, his departure seemed unlikely. While Guillen's relationship with White Sox GM **Ken Williams** is turbulent, he is under contract through 2012, and owner **Jerry Reinsdorf** remains fond of him.

The Rockies are moving into sensitive territory with first baseman **Todd Helton**. **Jason Giambi** emerged as a superior offensive option during the team's late surge, and the Rockies almost certainly will want to diminish Helton's role next season by adding a right-handed hitter at first. The problem is, the Rockies still owe him \$19.1 million next season, plus a \$4.6 million buyout. Helton, 37, could accept a settlement and retire, but players of his stature rarely concede that their careers are over.

A rival GM with potential interest in Phillies rightfielder **Jayson Werth** as a free agent is skeptical about how the right-handed slugger would fare in a lesser lineup. "Is he a big bat without other big bats around him?" the GM asked. "Can he carry a team? Can he be the guy when he's **Ryan Howard**, when he's **Chase Utley**?" Another question about Werth is how he would perform if he were not playing half of his games at hitter-friendly Citizens Bank Park, though his home-road splits have been fairly even with the Phillies.

The Cardinals were on the verge of a dubious feat — missing the post-season despite having three starting pitchers (**Chris Carpenter**, former Braves farmhand **Adam Wainwright** and **Jaime Garcia**) with ERAs under 3.00. According to STATS LLC, only nine teams since 1969 have suffered such a fate — none since the current divisional format was enacted in 1994. Only four teams since '89 even had three starters with sub-3.00 ERAs — the 1996, '97 and '98 Braves and the 2005 Astros.

Reds Triple-A pitching coach **Ted Power** says lefthander **Aroldis Chapman**'s hands are so large, it might be difficult for him to master a changeup. Chapman, 22, throws his slider about 10-12 mph slower than his 100-plus mph fastball, but Power is referring to a true off-speed pitch, something in the 80-mph range.

Adding a slugger is a priority for the Dodgers this off-season, but the team will limit its options if it sticks with **James Loney** at first base. **Adam Dunn**, **Paul Konerko** and **Carlos Pena** are among the many potential free agents at first, and **Prince Fielder** could be had in a trade. Loney, meanwhile, struggled after the All-Star Break, and his OPS is below average for a first baseman.

Reds manager **Dusty Baker** is a big fan of Brewers centerfielder **Lorenzo Cain**, and recalls asking Brewers Triple-A manager **Don Money** about the youngster in spring training. Money downplayed Cain's skills, prompting Baker to respond, "Really? I know you ain't going to give him up. But you ain't going to hide him long."

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

INCOMPARABLE TABLE SETTERS

BY STEVE FALL

NEARLY ALL strong hitting teams share one quality: They get plenty of runners on base. This year's Braves are no exception. They led the National League with a .342 on-base percentage through Aug. 31. They also had the right players reaching base, with the top of the order consistently getting the lineup rolling.

The Braves ranked among the league's top four teams in on-base percentage for each of the lineup's first four batting positions. No other NL team had done that this season.

The Braves' leadoff hitters had the league's fourth highest on-base percentage (.342), trailing the Diamondbacks (.371), Brewers (.363) and Dodgers (.362). Omar Infante, who entered the season with just a .310 career on-base percentage, had a huge impact on the lineup. He had a .375 OBP overall, .377 when batting leadoff. With Infante starting in the leadoff spot – which he had done 36 times – the Braves averaged 5.28 runs per game. That figured dropped to 4.61 in all other games.

Atlanta's second-place hitters have fared even better. They led the NL with a .364 on-base percentage. Cincinnati came next at .360. Jason Heyward had the most success in the two spot. He had a .387 overall OBP and .383 figure when batting second. The Braves had scored 5.13 runs per game with Heyward batting second, compared to 4.43 runs in all other games.

The Braves number three hitters – a spot filled mostly by Chipper Jones until he was injured – had also reached consistently. Their .385 on-base percentage placed fourth behind the Reds (.421), Cardinals (.408) and Brewers (.392). With Brian McCann batting cleanup for most of the season, the team's number four hitters led the league. Atlanta's .383 OBP in this lineup spot surpassed second-place Colorado (.378).



Percentage of quality starts demonstrates Tim Hudson's amazing consistency this season. He had 22 quality starts (outings of at least six innings with three or fewer earned runs allowed) in 27 games started. His 81.5 quality starts percentage tied Josh Johnson of the Marlins for the NL lead.

Greg Maddux is the only Atlanta Braves

The Braves' No.-2 hitters had the best on-base percentage in the NL, led by Jason Heyward, who helped the team score .7 runs per game more when he hit second than when he didn't.



pitcher ever to top Hudson's level. Maddux had a 96.0 quality starts percentage in the strike-shortened 1994 season, and an 81.8 figure in 1997.

Hudson pitched at least six innings in all but two starting assignments this season at this writing. He had allowed either zero or one earned run in 13 of his 27 starts, winning each of those games.

Hudson has managed to silence opposing lineups without striking out many batters. He had just 5.3 strikeouts per nine innings.

Only three other pitchers since 2000 had ERA figures under 3.00 while striking out fewer than 5.5 batters per nine innings. All three occurrences came in 2002 and had a Braves connection. Both Maddux (2.62 ERA) and Tom Glavine (2.96) did this for Atlanta that year. Current Brave Derek Lowe did it with a 2.58 ERA for the Red Sox.

Hudson's key has always been keeping the ball on the ground, but this season he has done this even better than usual. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, Hudson led all NL pitchers with a 1.86 ratio

of groundballs to flyballs. Lowe ranked a distant second at 1.34.

With a 15-5 won-lost record this season added to his already outstanding career numbers, Hudson has entered exclusive territory. His 163-83 record gives him a .663 winning percentage. Among pitchers with at least 150 decisions since 1940, Hudson's percentage ranks fifth behind only Whitey Ford (.690), Pedro Martinez (.687), Don Gullett (.686) and Vic Raschi (.667). He led two active pitchers by a narrow margin - Johan Santana (.657) and Roy Halladay (.656).



Jonny Venters had done just about everything that can be asked of a setup reliever. He had a sensational 1.71 ERA and 18 holds. He had also given Bobby Cox quantity, with 68.1 innings in 62 appearances. Venters excelled when asked to pitch out of jams, stranding all but five of 22 runners he inherited. He had also limited opposing batters to a .182 batting average and struck out 10.0 batters per nine innings.

Despite his strong performance, Venters faces a crowded race for the National League Rookie of the Year. In addition to



Tim Hudson, who missed nearly all of last season while rehabbing from elbow surgery, is posting quality starts at a rate exceeded in Atlanta only by Greg Maddux.

POUYA DANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Jonny Venters was compiling a season that ranks among the best in Atlanta history - for a rookie or veteran reliever.



POUYA DANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

several strong position player candidates, including Jason Heyward, Cardinals starting pitcher Jaime Garcia (12-6, 2.33 ERA) should get some votes. Among rookie relievers, Brewers closer John Axford had 19 saves, a 7-1 record, and 2.53 ERA. Even though his 18 holds led all NL rookies, setup men like Venters rarely receive much award consideration.

Venters still ranks among the top rookie relievers since the Braves moved to Atlanta in 1966. The club has had six relievers draw votes in Rookie of the Year balloting: Steve Bedrosian (1982), Mike Stanton (1991), Mark Wohlers (1992), Greg McMichael (1993), Kerry Ligtenberg (1998) and Kevin McGlinchy (1999).

Six other rookie relievers pitched well enough to deserve some consideration for the best in club history, despite not getting any Rookie of the Year votes: Cecil Upshaw (1967), Dave Campbell (1977), Joey McLaughlin (1979), Paul Assenmacher (1986), John Rocker (1998) and Peter Moylan (2007).

Among this group of 13 relievers, Venters ranked first in ERA (1.71), holds (18) and strikeouts per nine innings (10.0). Only Rocker's .172 batting average allowed led Venters' .182. Since he rarely closed games this season, Venters had just one save. Ligtenberg topped the group with 30 saves, followed by McMichael's 19. Among the

non-closers, Venters had the best overall numbers.

In fact, Atlanta Braves history has seen few relievers - rookie or non-rookie - post numbers like Venters in key categories such as ERA, batting average allowed, and strikeouts per nine innings. Six other relievers had earned run averages below 2.00 in at least 60 innings pitched: Chris Hammond (0.95 ERA in 2002), John Smoltz (1.12, 2003), Moylan (1.80, 2007), Tom House (1.93, 1974) and Mike Remlinger (1.99, 2002). Rick Camp did this twice (1.78 ERA in 1981 and 1.91 in 1980).

Only six Braves relievers have had batting average allowed figures below .200 in at least 60 innings besides Venters (.182). Both Hammond (.195 in 2002) and Remlinger (.198, 2002) made this list, as well as the previous one. They join Rocker (.180, 1999), Rafael Soriano (.181, 2007 and .194, 2009), Juan Berenguer (.189, 1991) and Ligtenberg (.193, 1998).

In strikeouts per nine innings, the club has also had just six players surpass Venters (10.0). Rocker ranked first with 12.9 strikeouts per nine innings in 1999. Wohlers topped 10 strikeouts per nine innings three times in 1995 (12.5), 1997 (11.9) and 1996 (11.6). Soriano (12.1 in 2009), Remlinger (11.2, 2001), Mike Gonzalez (10.9, 2009) and Smoltz (10.2, 2003) round out the group.

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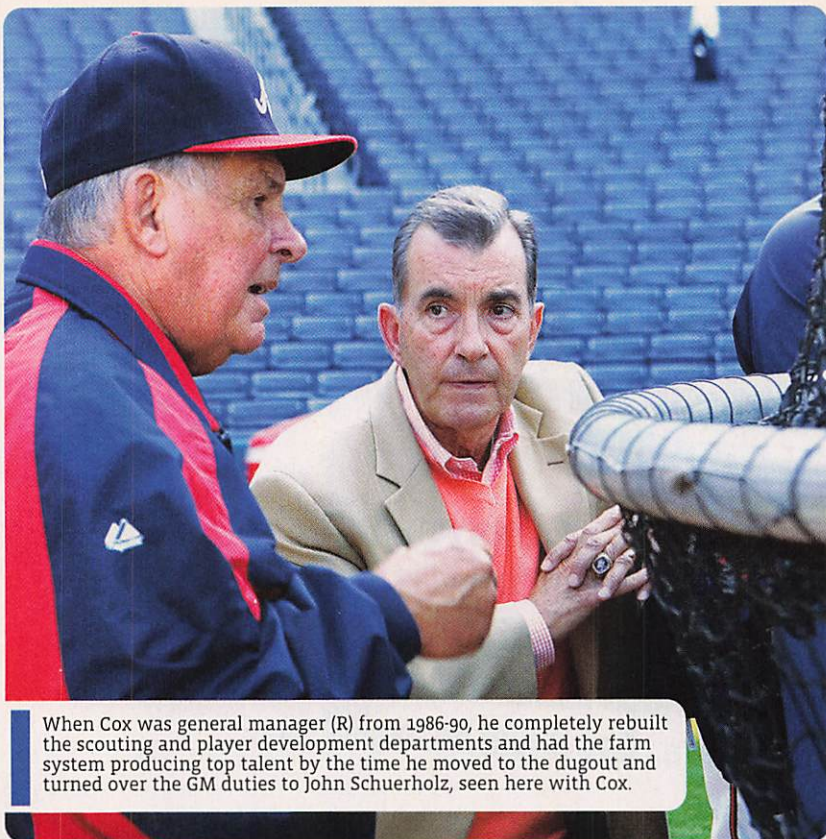
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When Cox was general manager (R) from 1986-90, he completely rebuilt the scouting and player development departments and had the farm system producing top talent by the time he moved to the dugout and turned over the GM duties to John Schuerholz, seen here with Cox.



PHOTOS: ATLANTA BRAVES

A REALLY BIG JOB

Laying The Groundwork For “Worst To First” May Be Cox’s Most Remarkable Achievement

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

In October 1985, Bobby Cox returned to the Atlanta Braves after a successful stint managing the Toronto Blue Jays from last place in their division in 1982 to an American League East division title in 1985. But Cox didn’t come back to Atlanta to manage.

Team owner Ted Turner, the same man that fired him in 1981, hired him to be the Braves’ general manager. The task at hand was no small order. The Braves were a floundering team, without focus, having just endured a 96-loss season in which they finished fifth and fired first-year manager Eddie Haas. Cox was brought in to turn it all around.

“I don’t remember calling it a ‘five-year plan,’” said Cox. “But I guess I knew it would take that long to turn this organization around, so that’s what we had to do. We had to sign all the guys we could during the drafts. We were trading for players. It wasn’t just pitchers. And we had to get rid of some older players that had value in order to get younger players. We had to start over.”

His first order of business was to restore the organization’s player development and scouting departments and restock the minor leagues.

Fortunately, Cox had a group of trusted colleagues who were all on the same organizational page.

Throughout Cox’s tenure as GM, John Mullen served as his

assistant, Hank Aaron was director of player development, and Paul Snyder was scouting director. Rod Gilbreath served as an assistant to Snyder. Long-time coach Bobby Dews re-joined the organization as Aaron’s assistant, and in 1990 became the director of player development when Aaron became a special assistant to team president Stan Kasten.

With this leadership team in place, the Braves were poised to make significant changes.

At the time, the Braves were relying on the major league scouting bureau to find prospects. Cox got approval to employ the team’s own full-time scouts and gave Snyder the go-ahead to hire them.

“Bobby and Paul went full bore into finding the best players wherever they could find them,” recalled Dews, still a consultant with the team. “The goal was to have the strongest and best farm club in baseball, building the foundation for it through all these number-one draft choices. The last-place finishes guaranteed that we’d have high draft choices, but it didn’t guarantee we’d get good players. We had Paul Snyder and his scouts to do that for us.”

Cox was a hands-on GM.

“He didn’t have to be everywhere, but he enjoyed doing those things - scouting, watching players, spending three or four days at the farm clubs,” said Dews. “It meant a lot to the people work-

NINTH IN A SERIES
#6 THE FINAL SEASON

ing down there to see him and to know he appreciated what they were doing."

And Cox was determined to make the best of his new job.

"I always preferred the field, but I dived into the job of GM as hard as I could," Cox said. "You do the best you can, and I had good people working with me."

Braves president John Schuerholz, who was GM with the Kansas City Royals at that time, remembered dealing with Cox as a fellow executive.

"It was easy for me to communicate with Bobby when we were general managers," said Schuerholz. "With some guys, it was an effort and a challenge. You had to play poker, do the interpretation of words and nuances. You didn't have to do that with Bobby."

But what impressed Schuerholz most was Cox's knowledge.

"He really knew players, his players and others, and he could evaluate players," said Schuerholz. "That's the most important evaluation you make, the evaluation of your own major league and minor league players. If you've evaluated them and you know them well, you'll make fewer mistakes."

Player knowledge helped Cox make decisions about some of the organization's most important draft selections in the mid to late 1980s, including pitchers Kent Mercker (1986), Mike Stanton (1987), Steve Avery and Mark Wohlers (1988) and position players Brian Hunter and Javy Lopez (1987), Ryan Klesko (1989) and Chipper Jones (1990). The organization also acquired several key players via deals including pitchers John Smoltz and Charlie Leibrandt and first baseman Francisco Cabrera all of whom made significant contribution to the Braves' success in the 1990s and, in the case of Smoltz, into the 2000s. Tom Glavine, drafted in 1984 before Cox's return, also was being developed at the same time.

"We all believed so much in what Bobby was doing that he had us, just like he has his players, behind him 100 percent," said Dews. "There was so much harmony, and that's what he's all about."

Dews wrote a manual, "The Braves Way," used in the Braves' farm system at that time. It explained what was expected of managers and coaches in the minor leagues. It told how the fundamentals should be taught to minor leaguers.

"Every organization has a manual explaining how to do relays, rundowns, and cutoffs. We just added a little more to it," said Dews. "Bobby wanted cohesiveness throughout the organization of how we do

these things and why we do them that way. Our ultimate goal was to be a winning organization, the best farm system in baseball. We prepared ourselves for success, even though at the time it seemed ludicrous. We knew if we got the talent and we did it this way, we couldn't be stopped."

In 1987, Kasten came on board as president of the Braves. He also was the general manager of the Turner-owned Atlanta Hawks NBA team and a rising star among sports executives.

"Bobby spent a lot of time rebuilding the minor leagues in that first year when I came over," recalled Kasten. "My orienta-

first team as GM came in sixth - last - in the division. The Braves improved to fifth place in 1987, but in 1988, they were back in last place with a dismal record of 54-106. In 1989 and 1990 they posted two more last-place finishes, a three-year run during which they averaged 100 losses per season.

It was a tough time to be a Brave and a Braves fan.

"We were suffering through losses," Kasten said. "We dipped into the free agent pool. We signed (first baseman) Nick Esasky (for 1990), and after nine games Nick got hurt (vertigo), and that was a real setback. We endured a 106-loss season -

“We all believed so much in what Bobby was doing that he had us, just like he has his players, behind him 100 percent,” said Bobby Dews. “There was so much harmony, and that’s what he’s all about.”



A member of the Braves organization since 1975, Bobby Dews was assistant director of player development and then director of player development while Bobby Cox was GM in 1986-90.

tion was building through youth, which was exactly what Bobby was doing. I had a little more 'juice' in terms of the ability to turn the dial all the way with regard to player development, adding more scouts, adding more coaches. Working along with Bobby, I think that helped speed things up."

Changing the expectations and culture of the organization was vital, but the results were far from immediate. In 1986, Cox's

that was hard to do. We had to replace a guy we really liked in (manager, 1986-88) Chuck Tanner, and then we replaced another guy we liked, Russ Nixon (manager, 1988-90)."

It was clear to Kasten that the man who should be on the field was the man in the general manager's office. And despite being asked point blank if he wanted to be manager, Cox would not step out and request a transfer back to the field.

"Over the years, three to four years that he was the GM with me, I asked him many times, 'Would you ever be the manager?'" said Kasten. "And he never answered in any way other than, 'I'll do whatever you and Ted want me to do.'"

Finally, on June 22, 1990, with the Braves record at 25-40, Kasten pulled the trigger. Nixon was fired, and Cox did double duty as GM and manager. Cox knew he would have only one job in 1991 but wasn't entirely sure which one it would be. That off-season, Kasten brought in the man who would replace Cox in the GM's office, Schuerholz.

Kasten said the mutual respect between Cox and Schuerholz made for an easy transition. "It was a great day for all three of us when John came on board," said Kasten. "It was a combination that was rare, in terms of our ability to communicate and work together. You had three guys with egos who never let that get in the way. I can say this about the other two guys, and I think the same is true for me - those guys really respect the other two jobs and understand the differences."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

By 1991, the stage for success was set. For five years under Cox's leadership, drafts and deals had been made that were about to transform the franchise. The farm system had been rebuilt. The scouting and player development departments had done their job. Schuerholz recognized this.

"I saw the pipeline of talent that was coming on," said Schuerholz, who shocked the baseball world when he left Kansas City to take on the biggest challenge in baseball. "We would change our focus for a short while, because we needed some pieces."

The new GM picked up veteran players Sid Bream, Rafael Belliard and Terry Pendleton, giving the Braves' young pitching staff an outstanding infield to back them up.

Despite a slow start in April, the 1991 Braves turned it on in May, going 17-9 for the month. The scrappy team went up and down in the standings, battling it out with the Dodgers until the next-to-last day of the regular season.

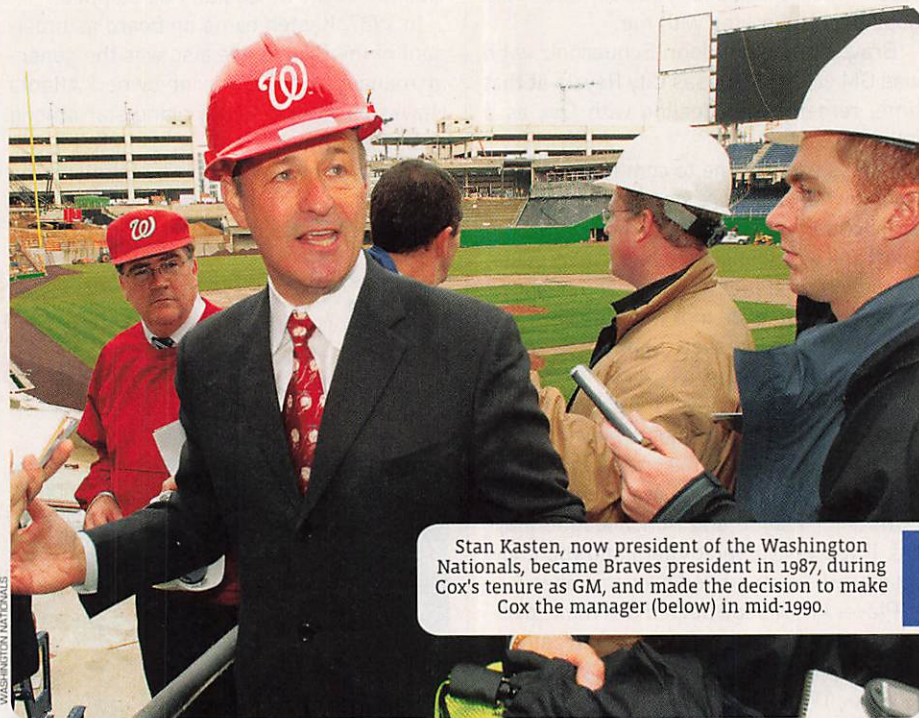
After defeating the Houston Astros, 5-2, the Braves gathered on the field at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium to watch the last out of the game between the Dodgers and San Francisco Giants on the stadium's center-field screen. As the Giants beat the Dodgers, the Braves celebrated their division triumph in front of thousands of fans that remained in the ballpark. The Braves had accomplished an amazing feat - going from worst to first in the span of a year.

Cox was named National League Manager of the Year for guiding the 1991



ATLANTA BRAVES

“Over the years, three to four years that he was the GM with me, I asked him many times, ‘Would you ever be the manager?’” said Stan Kasten. “And he never answered in any way other than, ‘I’ll do whatever you and Ted want me to do.’”



Stan Kasten, now president of the Washington Nationals, became Braves president in 1987, during Cox's tenure as GM, and made the decision to make Cox the manager (below) in mid-1990.

Braves to the World Series, but it would not have happened without his exemplary work as a general manager during the five years that preceded that season.

"It was one of those fortuitous, serendipitous comings-together at a time when the team was ready to take off," said Kasten. "And with special ownership [Turner] who doesn't get enough credit for being really good at allowing people that he trusts to do their job. That's so important, and obviously it paid off."

The winning continued, year after year. Cox, Schuerholz, Kasten and the scouting department kept finding just the right players at just the right time. Greg Maddux joined the rotation in 1993 and worked his considerable pitching magic, winning 20 games and earning the Cy Young Award. The Braves became known for their outstanding starting pitching and developing players like catcher Javy Lopez, first baseman Ryan Klesko, centerfielder Andruw Jones, and third baseman Chipper Jones.

In 1995, the team returned to the World Series for the third time under Cox and defeated the Cleveland Indians, 1-0, in a decisive Game 6 pitchers' duel.

The remarkable run finally ended in

2005, with an unprecedented 14 straight division titles that began in 1991 when the Braves turned the baseball world on its ear.

Through it all, Cox served the organization well as field manager to teams that changed personnel frequently. Cox remained the constant.

"I don't think his teams underachieve, they always achieve their maximum," said Kasten. "You can win or lose a World Series by the bounce of a ball, and that certainly happened during our run, but it's hard to get to the post-season. We made it to eight NL Championship Series in a row. That might be harder than the 14 straight divisions, because you have to beat good teams to get there."

While he has every right to pat himself on the back, don't expect Cox to do so. When asked to reflect on his years as GM and his success managing the Braves, Cox shrugged and said, modestly, "You can lay the best plans out there and they can fail. We were lucky. In our case, it worked. We had great people in place."

What he failed to mention is that he put them there.

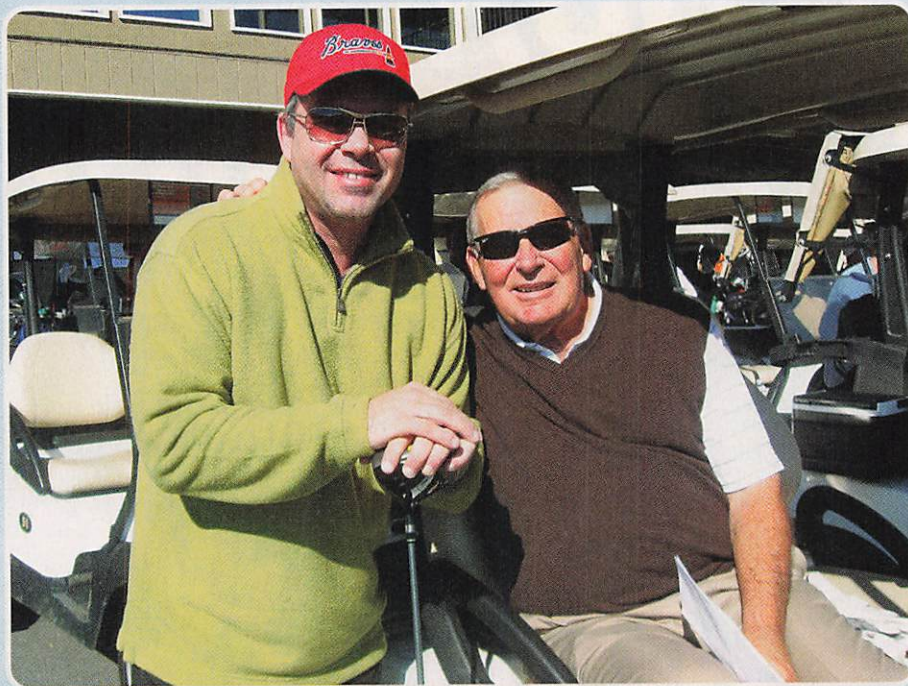
NEXT MONTH: PART TEN.

BOBBY COX IS RETIRING!

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Lemke Says Cox Brought Immediate Confidence And Change In Expectations To Dugout



Former second baseman Mark "Dirt" Lemke (L), a hero of the 1991 World Series and now part of the Braves radio team, visits with Cox regularly, as he's doing here at a golf tournament last off-season.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

If former Atlanta Braves second baseman Mark Lemke had his way, Bobby Cox would manage his final game wearing a suit and a top hat.

"I said it would be great to see him manage a game dressed like Connie Mack," said Lemke. "I even told him I'd pay the fine for him smoking a cigar in the dugout!"

Though the chances of that happening are slim to none, it's a great image and a perfect example of the type of conversation that frequently takes place between Lemke and his former manager.

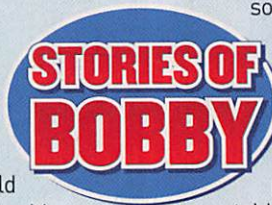
Before each home game, Cox can be found sitting in the small office just off the dugout where he and Lemke reminisce about days gone by and cajole each other about whose workout regimen is more strenuous.

"These days we don't talk about baseball as much as we used to," said Lemke, now host of the Braves pre-game radio show. "We just like to talk about what's been going on in our lives, who's walking more, or hasn't walked lately. Back when I played for him, there was a distance because he was my manager. But now I'm getting to

know him personality-wise."

Lemke played for the Braves from 1988-97 and is best remembered for his stirring performance in the 1991 World Series, when he batted .417 with three triples and was in line to be the Series MVP if the Braves won Game 7.

"Until he came to the field (as manager in mid-1990), I had only known him as a suit-and-tie general manager," said Lemke, who earned the nickname "Dirt" from Cox for his gritty style of play. "The



A player can tell when a manager feels panicky or loses confidence in a player or a team," Lemke said. "We never got that from Bobby. His confidence definitely wore off on us."

next thing I knew, he was wearing a full uni (uniform) all the way down to the spikes."

The players sensed a shift in expectation immediately, according to Lemke.

"A player can tell when a manager feels

panicky or loses confidence in a player or a team," he said. "We never got that from Bobby. His confidence definitely wore off on us."

Cox and Lemke had a common baseball background. Lemke was from Utica, New York, and grew up watching the Yankees' Triple-A team at Syracuse, then managed by former Yankees third baseman Cox.

"A lot of things he taught came from the Yankees," said Lemke. "I think he saw how they did things, the values it took to win and create dynasties, and brought that to Atlanta. We didn't know about winning year after year, but we sure learned."

Playing for Cox for seven years gave Lemke a bird's eye view of how he managed. One of Lemke's favorite moments came during the 1995 World Series when Mike Devereaux slid into second base and Indians shortstop Omar Vizquel bobbled the ball.

"I don't remember which game it was, but Devereaux was called out and Bobby went out to argue the call," recalled Lemke. "I saw him walking halfway across the field, and he was giving Jimmy Williams the squeeze sign! Even when he was arguing a call, there was something else going on."

Lemke said he has since asked Cox about his habit of calling signs for situations that haven't arisen yet.

"He anticipates at least two plays ahead," said Lemke. "He told me, 'You'll never think along with me, so don't even try.'"

Lemke said Cox's passion and respect for the game is one of his greatest attributes.

"You would never know this is his last season," said Lemke. "He respects the game too much to make this about him. He respects the schedule. He's not counting

down the homestands until the end. He expects his team to play the game the same, whether they're 25 games out or in first place. It's going to be a sad day for baseball the day he steps away."



2011 SCHEDULE



MARCH

Tues., March 29	Minnesota (Exhibition)	7:00 p.m.
Wed., March 30	Minnesota (Exhibition)	12:00 p.m.
Thurs., March 31	at Washington *SEASON OPENER	TBD

APRIL

Sat., April 2	at Washington	TBD
Sun., April 3	at Washington	TBD
Mon., April 4	at Milwaukee	TBD
Tues., April 5	at Milwaukee	TBD
Wed., April 6	at Milwaukee	TBD
Thur., April 7	at Milwaukee	TBD
Fri., April 8	Philadelphia *HOME OPENER	7:30 p.m.
Sat., April 9	Philadelphia	7:00 p.m.
Sun., April 10	Philadelphia	1:30 p.m.
Tues., April 12	Florida	7:00 p.m.
Wed., April 13	Florida	7:00 p.m.
Thur., April 14	Florida	7:00 p.m.
Fri., April 15	Mets	7:30 p.m.
Sat., April 16	Mets	7:00 p.m.
Sun., April 17	Mets	1:30 p.m.
Mon., April 18	at Dodgers	TBD
Tues., April 19	at Dodgers	TBD
Wed., April 20	at Dodgers	TBD
Thur., April 21	at Dodgers	TBD
Fri., April 22	at San Francisco	TBD
Sat., April 23	at San Francisco	TBD
Sun., April 24	at San Francisco	TBD
Mon., April 25	at San Diego	TBD
Tues., April 26	at San Diego	TBD
Wed., April 27	at San Diego	TBD
Fri., April 29	St. Louis	7:30 p.m.
Sat., April 30	St. Louis	7:00 p.m.

MAY

Sun., May 1	St. Louis	1:30 p.m.
Mon., May 2	Milwaukee	7:00 p.m.
Tues., May 3	Milwaukee	7:00 p.m.
Wed., May 4	Milwaukee	7:00 p.m.
Thurs., May 5	Milwaukee	7:00 p.m.
Fri., May 6	at Philadelphia	TBD
Sat., May 7	at Philadelphia	TBD
Sun., May 8	at Philadelphia	TBD
Tues., May 10	Washington	7:00 p.m.
Wed., May 11	Washington	7:00 p.m.
Thurs., May 12	Washington	7:00 p.m.
Fri., May 13	Philadelphia	7:30 p.m.
Sat., May 14	Philadelphia	7:00 p.m.
Sun., May 15	Philadelphia	1:30 p.m.
Mon., May 16	Houston	7:00 p.m.
Tues., May 17	Houston	1:00 p.m.
Wed., May 18	at Arizona	TBD
Thurs., May 19	at Arizona	TBD
Fri., May 20	at Angels	TBD
Sat., May 21	at Angels	TBD
Sun., May 22	at Angels	TBD
Tues., May 24	at Pittsburgh	TBD
Wed., May 25	at Pittsburgh	TBD

Fri., May 27	Cincinnati	7:30 p.m.
Sat., May 28	Cincinnati	7:00 p.m.
Sun., May 29	Cincinnati	1:30 p.m.
Mon., May 30	San Diego	1:00 p.m.
Tues., May 31	San Diego	7:00 p.m.

JUNE

Wed., June 1	San Diego	7:00 p.m.
Fri., June 3	at Mets	TBD
Sat., June 4	at Mets	TBD
Sun., June 5	at Mets	TBD
Tues., June 7	at Florida	TBD
Wed., June 8	at Florida	TBD
Thurs., June 9	at Florida	TBD
Fri., June 10	at Houston	TBD
Sat., June 11	at Houston	TBD
Sun., June 12	at Houston	TBD
Mon., June 13	at Houston	TBD
Tues., June 14	Mets	7:00 p.m.
Wed., June 15	Mets	7:00 p.m.
Thurs., June 16	Mets	7:00 p.m.
Frid., June 17	Texas	7:30 p.m.
Sat., June 18	Texas	7:00 p.m.
Sun., June 19	Texas	1:30 p.m.
Mon., June 20	Toronto	7:00 p.m.
Tues., June 21	Toronto	7:00 p.m.
Wed., June 22	Toronto	1:00 p.m.
Fri., June 24	at San Diego	TBD
Sat., June 25	at San Diego	TBD
Sun., June 26	at San Diego	TBD
Mon., June 27	at Seattle	TBD
Tues., June 28	at Seattle	TBD
Wed., June 29	at Seattle	TBD

JULY

Fri., July 1	Baltimore	7:30 p.m.
Sat., July 2	Baltimore	7:00 p.m.
Sun., July 3	Baltimore	1:30 p.m.
Mon., July 4	Colorado	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 5	Colorado	7:00 p.m.
Wed., July 6	Colorado	7:00 p.m.
Thurs., July 7	Colorado	1:00 p.m.
Fri., July 8	at Philadelphia	TBD
Sat., July 9	at Philadelphia	TBD
Sun., July 10	at Philadelphia	TBD
Tues., July 12	All-Star Game @ Arizona	TBD
Fri., July 15	Washington	7:30 p.m.
Sat., July 16	Washington	7:00 p.m.
Sun., July 17	Washington	1:30 p.m.
Mon., July 18	at Colorado	TBD
Tues., July 19	at Colorado	TBD
Wed., July 20	at Colorado	TBD
Thurs., July 21	at Colorado	TBD
Fri., July 22	at Cincinnati	TBD
Sat., July 23	at Cincinnati	TBD
Sun., July 24	at Cincinnati	TBD
Mon., July 25	Pittsburgh	7:00 p.m.
Tues., July 26	Pittsburgh	7:00 p.m.
Wed., July 27	Pittsburgh	7:00 p.m.
Thurs., July 28	Pittsburgh	7:00 p.m.

Fri., July 29	Florida	7:30 p.m.
Sat., July 30	Florida	7:00 p.m.
Sun., July 31	Florida	1:30 p.m.

AUGUST

Mon., August 1	at Washington	TBD
Tues., August 2	at Washington	TBD
Wed., August 3	at Washington	TBD
Fri., August 5	at Mets	TBD
Sat., August 6	at Mets	TBD
Sun., August 7	at Mets	TBD
Mon., August 8	at Florida	TBD
Tues., August 9	at Florida	TBD
Wed., August 10	at Florida	TBD
Fri., August 12	Cubs	7:30 p.m.
Sat., August 13	Cubs	7:00 p.m.
Sun., August 14	Cubs	1:30 p.m.
Mon., August 15	San Francisco	7:00 p.m.
Tues., August 16	San Francisco	7:00 p.m.
Wed., August 17	San Francisco	7:00 p.m.
Thurs., August 18	San Francisco	7:00 p.m.
Frid., August 19	Arizona	7:30 p.m.
Sat., August 20	Arizona	7:00 p.m.
Sun., August 21	Arizona	1:30 p.m.
Mon., August 22	at Cubs	TBD
Tues., August 23	at Cubs	TBD
Wed., August 24	at Cubs	TBD
Thurs., August 25	at Cubs	TBD
Fri., August 26	at Mets	TBD
Sat., August 27	at Mets	TBD
Sun., August 28	at Mets	TBD
Tues., August 30	Washington	7:00 p.m.
Wed., August 31	Washington	7:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

Thurs., September 1	Washington	7:00 p.m.
Fri., September 2	Dodgers	7:30 p.m.
Sat., September 3	Dodgers	7:00 p.m.
Sun., September 4	Dodgers	1:30 p.m.
Mon., September 5	at Philadelphia	TBD
Tues., September 6	at Philadelphia	TBD
Wed., September 7	at Philadelphia	TBD
Fri., September 9	at St. Louis	TBD
Sat., September 10	at St. Louis	TBD
Sun., September 11	at St. Louis	TBD
Mon., September 12	Florida	7:00 p.m.
Tues., September 13	Florida	7:00 p.m.
Wed., September 14	Florida	12:00 p.m.
Fri., September 16	Mets	7:30 p.m.
Sat., September 17	Mets	7:00 p.m.
Sun., September 18	Mets	1:30 p.m.
Mon., September 19	at Florida	TBD
Tues., September 20	at Florida	TBD
Wed., September 21	at Florida	TBD
Fri., September 23	at Washington	TBD
Sat., September 24	at Washington	TBD
Sun., September 25	at Washington	TBD
Mon., September 26	Philadelphia	7:00 p.m.
Tues., September 27	Philadelphia	7:00 p.m.
Wed., September 28	Philadelphia	7:00 p.m.

Tentative and subject to change.
Game times and broadcast information to be determined except where noted.
Home games in bold.

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Freeman And Teheran Receive Top Honors When Farm Products Are Recognized

CREAM OF THE CROP

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

Julio Teheran and Brandon Beachy arrived at Turner Field on Sept. 12 to be recognized with the other prospects who were named the Braves' Minor League Pitchers and Players of the Year. Both believe they could soon return as major leaguers.

"Obviously, I'd love to keep pitching [this year]," Beachy said. "But if that opportunity isn't there right now, if I continue to do what I've been doing, it will be there in the future."

While Teheran could be widely considered the game's top prospect this winter, Beachy undoubtedly was one of the game's most surprising prospects this summer. Two years after being found by the Braves while serving as a reliever in the Virginia Valley Summer League, the 24-year-old righthander managed to produce the best ERA (1.73) among all minor league pitchers this year.

After beginning this season as a reliever with Double-A Mississippi, Beachy continued to flourish as a starter. In the seven starts he made after being promoted to Triple-A Gwinnett, he went 2-0 with a 1.73 ERA.

Not bad, considering he worked about five innings in high school and didn't begin pitching regularly until given a chance to be a closer for Indiana Wesleyan, an NAIA school.

Braves scout Gene Kearns saw him pitch in the Virginia Summer League and then persuaded him to skip his senior season of



BILL SETUFF

college to take advantage of the chance to spend the final month of the 2008 season with rookie-level Danville.

"It might be surprising to a lot of people," Beachy said. "But I've never doubted my abilities. I achieved what I wanted to."

Teheran avoided the shoulder discomfort that plagued him in the past and posted stats of 9-8 with a 2.59 ERA with Class-A Rome, advanced Class-A Myrtle Beach and Double-A Mississippi this year. The 19-year-old righthander registered 159 strikeouts and issued 40 walks in 142 2/3 innings. There's seemingly a chance this highly regarded prospect could make his major league debut as soon as next season.

"I'm going to come in with that mindset, but I've got a lot of work to do," Teheran said with minor league outfielder Willie Cabrera serving as an interpreter.

Teheran was honored as the organization's Minor League Pitcher of the Year and first baseman Freddie Freeman, who turned 21 the day the group was honored and already earned a September callup to Atlanta, was named the organization's Minor League Player of the Year.

This year's farm system honorees recognized at Turner Field follow.



BILL BAILEY

Freddie Freeman (above) appears to be the leading candidate for the regular first base job in Atlanta next season; Julio Teheran (L) is only 19 years old and already has reached Double A; and Craig Kimbrel (below) could be a strong candidate to be the Braves' closer next season.

BRAVES MINOR LEAGUE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

FREDDIE FREEMAN, 1B

BRAVES MINOR LEAGUE PITCHER OF THE YEAR

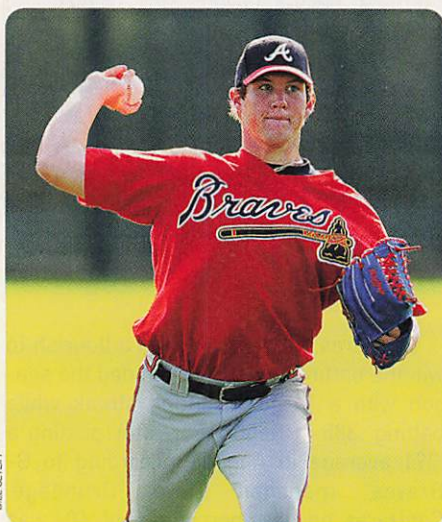
JULIO TEHERAN, RH

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

Gwinnett	Barbaro Canizares, 1B
Mississippi	Willie Cabrera, OF
Myrtle Beach	Mycal Jones, SS
Rome	Philip Gosselin, 2B
Danville	Elmer Reyes, 2B
Gulf Coast	Matt Lipka, SS
Dominican Summer League	Gerrado Reyes, 2B

PITCHERS OF THE YEAR

Gwinnett	Craig Kimbrel, RH
Mississippi	Brandon Beachy, RH
Myrtle Beach	Randall Delgado, RH
Rome	Arodis Vizcaino, RH
Danville	Carlos Perez, LH
Gulf Coast	Dan Jurik, RH
Dominican Summer League	Ignacio Geronimo, RH



BILL SETUFF



FREEMAN ALREADY FITTING INTO CHIPPER'S TRIPLE-A FOOTPRINT

THE MOST POTENT offensive tag team in the minor leagues split up during the 2010 season when Jason Heyward continued his rapid ascent through the Braves' farm system that culminated with earning the starting right-field job in Atlanta.

First baseman Freddie Freeman, who made every previous jump with Heyward since they were drafted in the first two rounds in 2007, was not a straggler. He completed the step to Gwinnett by overcoming a rocky start to emerge as one of the top players in the Triple-A ranks. His performance was so impressive that Freeman and Heyward were reunited in the major leagues when the former was promoted to Atlanta on Sept. 1.

"There were a lot of ups and downs this season, but I feel like I learned a lot," Freeman said. "I made several adjustments, particularly in terms of getting my pitch to hit. At the beginning of the year, I was swinging at everything, being too aggressive. Once I settled down, everything started to happen for me."

Most notably, Freeman became the first Braves' farmhand to win International League Rookie of the Year honors since Chipper Jones in 1993. The first baseman was a deserving recipient after leading the league with 147 hits and 240 total bases, tying for second with a .319 batting average, and placing second with 35 doubles. He also ranked fourth with a .521 slugging percentage and fifth with 55 extra-base hits.

His performance came on the heels of a difficult 2009 season in which Freeman battled one injury after another while hitting well at advanced-A Myrtle Beach and receiving a promotion to Double-A Mississippi on July 3. He got off to a strong start in the Southern League before an ailing wrist severely limited his productivity at the plate.

Freeman learned from the bumps and bruises by making a few changes in his off-season conditioning. As a result, the lone physical challenge he faced in 2010 was a minor knee

injury he suffered in early June that cost him eight games. His good health coincided with even better numbers, which led to his big-league promotion as well as the possibility that Freeman could open the 2011 season as the starting first baseman in Atlanta.

"I feel I'm ready for that challenge," Freeman said. "The Braves are going to do what they feel is the best thing for me and for their team. They know what they're doing, and I'm going to listen to what they say. In the meantime, I'll get my feet wet and keep working hard so that I'm ready when they need me."

Freeman, who didn't turn 21 years old until Sept. 12, and Heyward, who turned 21 about a month earlier (Aug. 9), can be expected to continue to do what they've always done on their way to the top. Roommates throughout their first three minor league seasons, they lived together once again this year in the Atlanta area. While Freeman got a good look at what a first-year player experiences in the major leagues, he said he and Heyward, a National League Rookie of the Year candidate, try to leave the game at the ballpark.

"We really don't talk about baseball that much," Freeman said. "When one of us was on the road this year and went 0-for-4, we'd call to see what was going on. The best part was hearing a few stories from Jason that only made me want to get there even quicker."

One thing Freeman tried to avoid was creating a timetable for his permanent arrival in Atlanta. While he knows neither Troy Glaus nor Derrek Lee is signed beyond this season, Freeman says he still has to do everything within his power to prepare himself, regardless of what's happening ahead of him on the depth chart.

"If I'd get caught up in that, I'd go crazy," Freeman said. "All I can do is get my work in, work as hard as I can, and keep doing what I've been doing. Hopefully it works out for the best."



Freddie Freeman led the International League in hits and total bases to become the first Braves farmhand to be named the IL Rookie of the Year since Chipper Jones in 1993.

CANIZARES WINS BATTING TITLE

Gwinnett's Barbaro Canizares has been one of the organization's most consistent hitters since signing with the Braves in 2006 after defecting from Cuba. A three-time all-star in the International League, he added to his lengthy list of accomplish-

ments this year by winning the league's batting crown with a .341 average. Canizares also was named to the IL's year-end all-star team, becoming the first player in league history to be selected as the league's top designated hitter in back-to-back seasons.

Canizares, 30, finished with a flourish to win the batting title. He concluded the season with a 14-game hitting streak while batting .385 in September after posting a .391 average in August. According to G-Braves manager Dave Brundage, Canizares' on-base percentage of .404 was

equally impressive, due in large part to his 40 walks and only 53 strikeouts.

"He hit the ball consistently all season and was our most productive player down the stretch," Brundage said. "He has a great approach, and you can tell he just loves to hit. It really is his passion."

Despite owning a .314 average in his five minor-league seasons, Canizares' major-league tenure consists of only five games with Atlanta in 2009 while Casey Kotchman and Greg Norton were injured in June. He went 4-for-21 at the plate. Though he was not among the players called up when rosters were expanded in September, Brundage believes Canizares is capable of being a productive big league hitter.

Canizares, who bats and throws right-handed, is the first Brave to win the IL batting crown since Tommy Gregg at Richmond in 1997.

DESERT DUTY

The Braves planned to send pitchers Brandon Beachy, Michael Broadway, Erik Cordier and Kyle Cofield, along with Freddie Freeman, shortstop Tyler Pastornicky and outfielder Cory Harrilchak, to the Arizona Fall League. The Atlanta contingent will play for the Phoenix Desert Dogs and manager Don Mattingly. Gwinnett hitting coach Jamie Dismuke, who spent two weeks with the major league club after the G-Braves' season concluded in early September, will be the team's hitting coach.

Other than Freeman, the two position players are not as well known as the pitchers. Harrilchak was drafted by the Braves in the 14th round in 2009 out of Elon (N.C.) University. He opened this season at Rome and hit .306 in 60 games prior to spending much of the second half at Myrtle Beach, where he batted .269 in 58 games prior to suffering an ankle injury on Aug. 20. Harrilchak is considered to be one of the purest hitters in the organization, with good speed and above-average instincts in center field.

Pastornicky was part of the mid-season trade with Toronto that also brought Alex Gonzalez to the Braves for Yunel Escobar. A shortstop who batted .254 in 38 games with Double-A Mississippi, Pastornicky was the Blue Jays' fifth-round draft pick in 2008, selected out of a Bradenton, Fla., high school. The son of former Kansas City Royals third baseman Cliff Pastornicky (1983) shows outstanding range with excellent speed, a good arm, and the ability to spray line drives from gap to gap.



THE G-BRAVES finished the season with a 72-71 record and in second place in the International League's South Division...

Brandon Beachy, who split the season between Gwinnett and Mississippi, led the minor leagues with a 1.73 ERA in 35 outings. A third baseman at Indiana Wesleyan prior to signing with Atlanta in 2008 as a non-drafted free agent, Beachy had 148 strikeouts and only 28 walks in 119.2 innings while limiting batters to a .211 average...

Scott Diamond, who joined the G-Braves in mid-July, struggled in his first and final outings with the team but was almost untouchable in between. The lefthander allowed one earned run or less in seven starts, including a complete-game shutout on Aug. 30 in which he took a no-hitter into the eighth inning. In 27 starts between Mississippi and Gwinnett this season, Diamond went 8-7 with a 3.46 ERA...

Todd Redmond was named the IL Pitcher of the Week for Aug. 23-29 after he posted a pair of six-inning shutout starts. Those showings capped a strong season for Redmond, who tied for the IL lead with 28 starts while ranking second with 162.2 innings pitched and 142 strikeouts...

Matt Young earned his second IL Batter of the Week award this season after hitting .360 from Aug. 16-22. Young quietly put together one of the better all-around seasons at the Triple-A level. He led the IL with 39 steals and ranked second with 146 hits and 88 runs scored, fifth with 33 doubles and a .380 on-base percentage, and 10th with a .300 batting average. Young also displayed his defensive versatility by playing second base in addition to left and center field...

Erik Cordier bounced back from a difficult debut at the Triple-A level to end the season on a positive note. After throwing 41 pitches and recording only two outs in his first start with the G-Braves on Sept. 1, Cordier pitched into the eighth inning and combined with two relievers to record a shutout in the final game of the season, a 7-0 victory at Charlotte on Sept. 6. He finished the season ranked second in the organization with 12 victories and ninth with a 3.82 ERA...

Third baseman **Wes Timmons** led the IL by striking out just once per 14.09 plate appearances. The veteran minor leaguer also was third in the league with a .400 on-base percentage and tied for fourth with 60 walks...

Middle infielder **Joe Thurston** raised his batting average 21 points in the last three

weeks of the season. He recorded a 12-game hitting streak from Aug. 19-31, during which he had nine two-hit games. After going 0-for-4 with a walk versus Norfolk on Sept. 1, Thurston concluded the year with a five-game hitting streak...

In the first inning against Charlotte on Aug. 25, Thurston and **Freddie Freeman** completed the first triple play for the Braves' Triple-A affiliate since May 23, 2005. Freeman caught a liner by **Dayan Viedo**, tagged first to retire **Brent Morel**, and then fired to Thurston at second to get **Buck Coats**...

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE

THE BRAVES have 41 players participating in Instructional League this fall at the team's spring training complex at ESPN Wide World of Sports in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. The roster includes 16 players who were drafted this past June, including first-round pick Matt Lipka.

Camp began on Sept. 15. Games started on Sept. 21 and are scheduled to continue through Oct. 23.

ROSTER PITCHERS

Juan Abreu, Luis Avilan, Thomas Berryhill, Caleb Brewer, Paul Clemens, Kyle Cofield, Randall Delgado, Dave Filak, Cory Gearrin, Matt Lewis, Brett Oberholtzer, Carlos Perez, Benino Pruneda, Zeke Spruill, Tyler Stovall, Richard Sullivan, Matt Suschak, Richard Tate, Julio Teheran.

CATCHERS

Christian Bethancourt, Cory Brownsten, Evan Gattis, Braeden Schlehuber, Jace Whitmer.

INFELDERS

William Beckwith, Brandon Drury, Phil Gosselin, Mycal Jones, Joe Leonard, Matt Lipka, Elmer Reyes, Edward Salcedo, Edison Sanchez, Andrelton Simmons, Joe Terdoslavich.

OUTFIELDERS

Thomas Cunningham, Kurt Fleming, Robert Hefflinger, Jason Mowry, David Rohm, Kyle Rose.

Shortstop **Brandon Hicks** was sidelined Aug. 21 through the rest of the season after he suffered a fractured right index finger while attempting to bunt. A strong fielder who struggled at the plate by hitting .211 at Gwinnett, Hicks had three different stints in the big leagues this season...

Closer **Craig Kimbrel** tied for third in the IL with 23 saves. With 83 strikeouts in 55.2 innings, Kimbrel averaged 13.42 strikeouts per nine innings... Outfielder **Wilkin Ramirez** provided some pop to the lineup after joining the G-Braves in early August from the Detroit organization. Ramirez hit safely in 11 of 12 games from Aug. 15-28 and hit home runs in back-to-back games on two occasions, Aug. 6-7 and Aug. 21-22. In last month's ChopTalk, a mistake was made in Ramirez's last name. We regret the error.



MISSISSIPPI DOUBLE A

THE M-BRAVES finished in fourth place in all phases of the 2010 Southern League South Division standings. Mississippi went 33-36 in the second half and 63-74 overall... First baseman **Mauro Gomez** hit .328 in August and September and finished the year ranked among the Southern League leaders in three categories. Gomez topped the SL with 42 doubles and 60 extra-base hits and tied for fourth with 233 total bases. Outfielder **Willie Cabrera** also had a strong offensive season, placing fourth in the SL with 37 doubles and sixth with a .306 batting average...

Richard Sullivan led the league's relievers by averaging only 1.12 walks per nine innings and 9.59 baserunners per nine innings. He also was second among relievers by limiting opponents to a .230 batting average...

Outfielder **Jordan Schafer**'s disappointing season came to a close when he was placed on the disabled list Aug. 23 with lingering problems with his wrist. Schafer went only 6-for-46 with the M-Braves after joining the club in late July...

The Braves were cautious with **Julio Teheran** during the final month of the season. The right-handed pitcher from Colombia worked only 96.1 innings in his first two years in the organization before pitching a combined 142.2 innings this season between stops at Rome, Myrtle Beach and Mississippi. Teheran pitched only 35.1 innings in August and September, with the Braves giving him five full days of rest between a few starts and 10 prior to his last one...

J.J. Hoover led the Atlanta farm system with 14 wins, including a 3-1 record in four starts after being promoted to Mississippi in mid-August. Hoover limited Southern League hitters to a .203 batting average while striking out 34 in 20.2 innings at the Double-A level. Hoover earned Carolina League Pitcher of the Week honors shortly after he was promoted by striking out eight batters in six shutout innings in his finale with Myrtle Beach on Aug. 16...

Hoover was promoted to Mississippi when pitcher **Jaye Chapman** was placed on the disabled list with right bicep tendinitis.

YEAR-END HONORS

ALL-STARS

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE GWINNETT

BARBARO CANIZARES, DH
FREDDIE FREEMAN, 1B

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE DANVILLE

ANDRELTON SIMMONS, SS

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR FREDDIE FREEMAN, 1B

Chapman returned to pitch six shutout innings of relief in his last four outings...

Third baseman **Donell Linares** was placed on the disabled list Aug. 24 with a fracture in his left hand after getting hit by a pitch. The Braves signed former Colorado prospect **Christian Colonel** to replace Linares.



MYRTLE BEACH ADVANCED A

THE PELICANS finished the season with an overall record of 58-82 yet managed to make a run for the playoffs in the second half before concluding with a 32-38 record, good for third place in the Carolina League's South Division...

Shortstop **Mycal Jones** was named the Pelicans' Player of the Year, and **Randall Delgado** was selected as the club's top pitcher of the season. Jones was promoted from Rome after the first week of June and responded by hitting safely in 20 of his first

22 games with Myrtle Beach. He also was named the Carolina League Player of the Week for Aug. 9-15, during which he posted his first career multi-homer game. Jones was promoted to Mississippi for the last week of the season and hit home runs in two of his first three games...

Delgado made 20 starts with Myrtle Beach prior to his promotion to Double-A on July 22. Despite spending the last six weeks of the season in Mississippi, Delgado led the CL with 120 strikeouts. He also ranked first with a walks-to-innings-pitched ratio of 1.03, second with an opponents' batting average of .210, and third with a 2.76 ERA...

Brett Oberholtzer finished the season on a strong note by pitching into the ninth inning in each of his last two starts and earning a pair of victories. The lefthander allowed one earned run, six hits and no walks while striking out 21 batters in 17 innings. He struck out 12 in his finale, on Sept. 5 versus Lynchburg, which matched his season-high...

Phil Gosselin became the first member of the 2010 draft class to reach Myrtle Beach when he played the final week of the season with the Pelicans. The University of Virginia product had an impressive professional debut at Rome while making a position change to second base after playing mostly in the outfield in college...

Cody Johnson was demoted to Myrtle Beach on Aug. 11 after struggling with injuries, a low batting average, high strikeout totals, and diminished power at Mississippi. The leftfielder regained the form that helped him lead the Carolina League with 32 home runs in 2009 and responded by batting .264 with six home runs and 25 RBIs in 25 games...

After missing nearly four months with a strained shoulder, **Cole Rohrbough** returned at the end of the season and pitched three times out of the bullpen. He allowed two earned runs and two hits in 3.1 innings and suffered the loss in the season finale...

Cole Miles tied for the league lead with nine triples and finished fifth with 27 stolen bases. **Matt Crim** ranked third in the CL with 149.2 innings pitched. **J.J. Hoover** was second with 118 strikeouts, tied for second with 11 wins, and ranked fourth with a 1.21 WHIP (walks plus hits per inning) and fifth with a 3.25 ERA and an opponents' batting average of .245...

Pitcher **Jason Lowey** was signed off the River City Rascals' roster in the independent Frontier League on Aug. 17 and did a

solid job out of the Pelicans' bullpen...

Matt Kennelly missed almost three weeks in mid-July with a hip injury but returned with added power in August. The catcher from Australia had only 10 career home runs, including two in 2010, before he hit five in the final month. He had four in as many games - one on Aug. 24, two on Aug. 26 for the first multi-homer game of his career, and another on Aug. 30.



ROME

CLASS A

THE R-BRAVES placed seventh in the second half of the South Atlantic League's South Division standings with a 29-41 record. Overall, Rome was 59-80... **Arodys Vizcaino** returned to Rome, as well as from the disabled list, to pitch in two games and 2.2 innings during the final week of the season. Vizcaino had an outstanding first half in the South Atlantic League prior to a promotion to Myrtle Beach. He suffered a torn elbow ligament in late June and missed the next two months...

Shortstop **Edward Salcedo** showed some pop with 11 extra-base hits in 54 games but struggled most of the time with Rome during the last two months. Salcedo, who received the largest signing bonus from the Braves for any international player prior to this season at \$1.6 million, showed impressive tools, including good range and a strong arm, but his lack of experience prevented him from excelling in the SAL...

David Hale, Atlanta's third-round pick in 2009, made an impressive transition to the relief corps after struggling as a starter early in the year. The Princeton University product made 21 appearances out of the bullpen and saved five games in six opportunities while limiting opponents to a .204 batting average, fifth-best among relievers in the SAL...

Brett DeVall was placed on the disabled list Aug. 17 with inflammation in his pitching elbow...

DeVall's roster spot was filled by pitcher **Tyler Stovall**, Atlanta's second-round draft pick in 2008. The left-handed Stovall pitched in relief at Danville and Rome this year after starting most of his first two seasons in the organization. Control has been an issue for Stovall, who walked 19 batters in 23.1 innings at Danville and eight in as many innings with Rome...

Third baseman **Joe Leonard**, Atlanta's

DOWN ON THE FARM



ERIK CORDIER

I FEEL LIKE I'M READY FOR THAT FINAL STEP

I'M EXCITED about how this year went. I set several goals before the season and reached all of them. The season was a great overall learning experience. I went from not really knowing what would happen last off-season, to getting an invite to big league spring training, to spending most of the season at Double-A and learning from pitching coach Marty Reed.

In 2005, I had a bone chip come loose in my knee during extended spring training that caused me to miss the regular season.

I wound up seeing several different doctors before having the chip taken out.

In 2007, I had another fluke injury. There were no warning signs. It didn't happen gradually. It was a one-pitch pop in my elbow, and I wound up having Tommy John surgery. There went another year and a half.

Being traded was literally a jaw-dropping experience. I was expecting to be in Arizona the entire year, just rehabbing my elbow in order to get healthy. (Royals farm director) J.J. Picollo called me in his office and said, "The bad news is you've been traded and we're going to lose you. The good news is you're going to a great organization," which was exactly right.

The trade was odd because of the uncertainty associated with my situation. Kansas City knew what I could do when I was healthy. Over here, I felt a little more pressure to come back and get to the point where I had been as fast as possible.

I had a few setbacks after the trade, and the uncertainty caused a little stress. It's tough enough to have the anxiety of being out for 12 months. What was encouraging was when I heard Mr. (Frank) Wren say they knew I was hurt and that they were willing to wait. That made me even more motivated.

When I was in Rome in 2008, the toughest part was logging the innings and understanding what my body was doing. Coming back from Tommy John surgery, your body doesn't respond the same as it did beforehand. I just wanted to get through the rest of the season as healthy as I could.

In 2009, at Myrtle Beach, the main goal was to get through the entire season healthy and take the post as many times as I could. It was a struggle at times with the number of walks I was allowing. It was extremely frustrating, and I needed to get into a rhythm while understanding my body better. Once I did that, I started to figure out a lot of things.

Today, things are getting to where I want them to be. I still feel like I'm not completely there yet. I really started to hit my stride this season in late June and July, and I feel like that's the kind of pitcher I can be over an entire season. That's the pitcher I want to bring to the post every time.

Just prior to that stretch, I stepped back and evaluated my approach while watching how other guys go about their preparation. I made a few alterations, and immediately my starts got better.

I feel like I'm ready to take that final step, and I hope other people feel that way, as well. I feel like my body is one good off-season from being exactly where it needs to be. Since coming here, I feel I've flown under the radar a little bit. Hopefully, I can show some people who I really am as a pitcher very soon.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Righthander Erik Cordier, 24, was acquired from Kansas City in exchange for shortstop Tony Pena Jr. at the end of spring training in 2007. The Green Bay, Wis., native was recovering from Tommy John surgery at the time and did not pitch in the Atlanta organization until 2008. In 2010, the former second-round draft pick (2004) went 11-7 with a 3.71 ERA in 25 games at Double-A Mississippi prior to a final-week promotion to Triple-A Gwinnett.

SINCE COMING HERE, I FEEL I'VE FLOWN UNDER THE RADAR A LITTLE BIT.

FARM STATISTICS

FINAL



GWINNETT

72-71

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | 2ND PLACE, SOUTH DIVISION

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Josh (OF)	.161	36	93	10	15	3	0	0	1	2	17	8
Bolivar, Luis (SS/2B)	.217	58	184	19	40	6	2	2	13	8	46	9
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.250	66	220	20	55	11	0	5	21	22	51	1
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.341	126	425	58	145	28	1	13	77	40	54	2
Cleven, Brent (OF)	.257	53	191	19	49	8	0	3	29	22	62	3
Freeman, Freddie (1B)	.319	124	461	73	147	35	2	18	87	43	84	6
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.319	30	116	13	37	7	2	0	17	4	21	3
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.211	77	261	27	55	9	1	7	22	20	74	10
Ramirez, Wilkin (OF)	.229	65	236	31	54	7	3	8	28	20	82	9
Romero, Alex (OF)	.190	18	58	2	11	1	0	1	2	3	10	1
Sammons, Clint (C)	.162	84	271	24	44	7	0	5	24	30	59	2
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.201	52	189	16	38	5	1	1	8	14	47	9
Taveras, Willy (OF)	.181	40	138	16	25	5	1	0	4	8	24	3
Thurston, Joe (INF)	.273	131	465	53	127	18	4	13	67	32	64	7
Timmons, Wes (3B)	.293	114	386	67	113	23	1	6	43	60	33	19
Young, Matt (OF)	.300	134	487	88	146	33	5	3	35	57	53	39

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Beachy, Brandon	2-0	2.17	8	7	1	45.2	40	17	11	6	48	.229
Broadway, Michael	4-0	5.73	17	0	0	22.0	21	17	14	9	19	.256
Cordier, Erik	1-1	5.63	2	2	0	8.0	7	5	5	7	4	.233
Diamond, Scott	4-1	3.36	10	10	0	56.1	53	25	21	15	33	.260
Dunn, Michael	2-0	1.52	38	0	7	47.1	31	12	8	25	64	.183
Gearrin, Cory	3-5	3.36	52	0	0	80.1	72	32	30	32	66	.246
Gomez, Mariano	3-2	2.89	30	0	1	46.2	41	18	15	18	28	.247
Gustafson, Tim	7-6	5.70	14	13	0	66.1	82	44	42	39	36	.313
Hyde, Lee	2-3	4.29	22	0	0	21.2	24	12	10	12	17	.308
Kimbrel, Craig	3-2	1.62	48	0	23	55.2	28	13	10	35	83	.148
Lyman, Jeff	0-0	4.72	21	0	0	34.1	32	24	18	23	26	.250
Marek, Stephen	2-2	1.43	49	0	9	50.1	38	13	8	19	56	.207
Parr, James	2-5	5.16	9	9	0	45.1	54	26	26	17	28	.305
Proctor, Scott	4-3	7.08	31	0	0	34.1	45	29	27	15	29	.321
Redmond, Todd	9-10	4.26	28	28	0	162.2	156	86	77	44	142	.250



MISSISSIPPI

63-74

SOUTHERN LEAGUE DOUBLE A | 4TH PLACE, SOUTH DIVISION

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bolivar, Luis (INF)	.277	47	159	22	44	6	2	3	17	13	41	5
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.306	99	366	48	112	37	1	5	56	29	36	13
Daniel, Michael (OF)	.244	77	246	24	60	10	1	3	25	24	47	14
Duncan, Eric (INF)	.267	119	439	56	117	23	5	8	64	35	108	6
Gomez, Mauro (1B)	.281	133	495	67	139	42	2	16	80	46	122	1
Gomez, Yasser (OF)	.323	38	127	9	41	3	0	0	9	19	9	1
Gonzalez, Juan (INF)	.206	34	102	7	21	4	0	0	12	14	26	0
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.189	75	233	26	44	6	0	10	31	25	114	9
Linares, Donell (3B)	.240	109	417	48	100	19	1	11	47	14	41	2
Machado, Alejandro (INF)	.275	49	138	24	38	7	0	2	19	24	21	2
Mercado, Orlando (C)	.286	84	262	30	75	9	0	0	20	39	38	3
Pastornicky, Tyler (SS)	.254	38	134	22	34	5	2	2	15	16	22	11
Richardson, Antwan (OF)	.279	74	272	60	76	8	1	0	20	41	47	24
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.220	64	173	17	38	7	2	0	24	20	36	3
Romero, Alex (OF)	.279	43	165	25	46	8	1	1	19	20	14	1
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.297	38	145	20	43	11	1	2	12	1	17	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Abreu, Juan	4-2	3.02	39	0	11	44.2	41	18	15	22	47	.243
Beachy, Brandon	3-1	1.47	27	6	1	73.2	53	17	12	22	100	.200
Broadway, Michael	1-1	3.45	23	0	1	31.1	30	12	12	16	38	.252
Chapman, Jaye	1-4	5.19	36	1	0	50.1	60	35	29	25	53	.291
Coffield, Kyle	1-3	4.39	18	10	0	55.1	58	30	27	23	38	.264
Cordier, Erik	11-7	3.71	25	21	0	135.2	116	61	56	69	113	.236
Delgado, Randall	3-5	4.74	8	8	0	43.2	36	26	23	20	42	.222
Diamond, Scott	4-6	3.52	17	17	0	102.1	113	45	40	39	90	.288
Gustafson, Tim	4-3	4.63	16	9	0	58.1	54	36	30	26	36	.249
Hyde, Lee	2-3	2.95	29	0	8	39.2	42	20	13	12	35	.271
Minor, Mike	2-6	4.03	15	15	0	87.0	74	48	39	34	109	.233
Palica, Thomas	3-1	7.31	25	0	1	32.0	39	27	26	16	45	.298
Pruneda, Benino	0-4	3.63	25	0	0	34.2	30	16	14	23	49	.236
Sullivan, Richard	4-11	5.09	36	13	2	120.1	140	81	68	40	91	.294
Teheran, Julio	3-2	3.38	7	7	0	40.0	29	15	15	17	38	.204
Thompson, Jacob	8-10	4.72	27	23	0	131.2	163	85	69	45	87	.301



MYRTLE BEACH

58-82

CAROLINA LEAGUE
ADVANCED A

4TH PLACE, SOUTHERN DIVISION

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Avila, Gerardo (1B)	.230	41	152	20	35	6	1	7	22	17	49	1
Culver, Calvin (OF)	.217	39	138	8	30	3	0	0	10	7	22	0
Harrilchak, Cory (OF)	.269	58	234	29	63	16	5	2	25	21	45	4
Jones, Michael (1B)	.282	97	372	40	105	20	0	5	47	34	80	1
Jones, Mycal (SS)	.269	69	275	51	74	19	1	7	22	31	66	15
Jones, Travis (2B)	.225	43	151	25	34	8	0	6	23	23	39	3
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.226	76	261	26	59	11	1	7	26	27	42	1
Kreke, Jordan (INF)	.226	48	164	22	37	7	1	2	15	22	36	1
Miles, Cole (OF)	.251	108	374	55	94	7	9	0	26	35	75	27
Nelson, Dan (INF)	.278	89	331	59	92	20	0	11	56	40	55	6
Rodriguez, Gerardo (OF)	.253	85	320	50	81	15	4	13	53	26	110	5
Sime, Samuel (INF)	.258	98	357	33	92	13	1	7	42	21	83	10
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.220	48	191	14	42	9	0	5	22	7	26	1
Sumoza, Luis (OF)	.219	81	278	23	61	11	4	2	24	22	82	6
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.253	76	233	36	59	9	4	3	21	17	62	11

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Avila, Luis	4-3	3.94	31	0	9	48.0	42	25	21	18	37	.240
Castro, Yelair	5-2	3.49	29	2	0	59.1	45	30	23	36	60	.211
Clemens, Paul	0-4	3.69	27	8	2	75.2	83	46	31	28	65	.275
Crim, Matthew	7-11	4.87	29	23	0	149.2	180	101	81	59	86	.300
Delgado, Randall	4-7	2.76	20	20	0	117.1	89	46	36	32	120	.210
Francis, David	2-3	4.31	21	0	0	39.2	49	22	19	22	29	.304
Hoover, J.J.	11-6	3.26	24	24	0	132.2	126	56	48	35	118	.245
Oberholtzer, Brett	6-6	4.15	22	18	2	112.2	123	59	52	18	107	.279
Ortega, Jose	2-4	5.14	7	7	0	28.0	41	20	16	7	14	.342
Palica, Thomas	0-0	2.28	16	0	1	27.2	24	8	7	9	26	.235
Paulino, Angelo	3-5	2.66	41	0	3	74.1	73	26	22	28	65	.261
Pruneda, Benino	1-1	2.70	20	0	5	30.0	25	14	9	14	44	.223
Rasmus, Cory	0-3	3.27	8	8	0	41.1	38	19	15	18	30	.247
Rodgers, Chad	1-8	4.73	33	0	2	45.2	45	31	24	27	37	.260
Spruill, Zeke	3-5	5.54	14	13	0	65.0	83	44	40	13	41	.310
Teheran, Julio	4-4	2.98	10	10	0	63.1	56	22	21	13	76	.233



ROME

59-80

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE
CLASS A

7TH PLACE, SOUTHERN DIVISION

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bethancourt, Christian (C)	.251	108	399	31	100	19	2	3	34	14	62	11
Cunningham, Todd (OF)	.260	65	231	32	60	9	3	1	20	14	30	7
Curley, Chris (INF)	.214	61	206	23	44	5	4	3	23	9	38	0
Flores, Ramon (OF)	.217	39	138	14	30	6	4	1	13	3	24	4
Gosselin, Philip (2B)	.294	57	214	26	63	9	3	2	24	25	51	7
Hanson, Jake (OF)	.208	85	279	27	58	15	3	3	28	19	111	9
Harrilchak, Cory (OF)	.306	60	219	31	67	10	3	1	22	24	24	18
Hefflinger, Robert (OF)	.245	77	282	28	69	19	0	6	53	25	85	2
Jones, Mycal (SS)	.261	53	199	27	52	12	0	6	34	11	48	6
Kreke, Jordan (3B/SS)	.248	75	282	35	70	14	1	0	32	24	50	7
Rose, Kyle (OF)	.259	87	321	52	83	7	3	0	21	28	69	26
Salcedo, Edward (SS)	.197	54	193	23	38	5	4	2	16	11	56	6
Schlehuber, Braeden (C)	.221	48	154	17	34	6	0	1	15	6	20	2
Spanjer-Furstenburg, Riaan (1B)	.266	62	229	26	61	13	1	2	22	19	41	0
Weaver, Matthew (INF/OF)	.267	100	345	27	92	20	3	2	37	19	86	4
Whitmer, Jace (1B/C)	.273	43	150	16	41	10	1	2	17	5	23	1

**DANVILLE****34-34****APPALACHIAN LEAGUE**
ROOKIE ADVANCED**T-2ND PLACE, EAST DIVISION**

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Dalton, Jakob (1B/OF)	.301	50	153	24	46	6	2	1	16	11	19	4
Delgado, Ryan (C)	.301	45	153	26	46	14	0	6	24	9	28	0
Falcon, Daniel (OF)	.206	21	68	7	14	3	1	3	11	1	15	1
Fleming, Kenny (OF)	.226	53	168	19	38	5	5	0	19	7	37	7
Frierson, Jarred (OF/2B)	.291	33	86	15	25	3	3	1	3	8	20	2
Gattis, Evan (C)	.288	60	222	33	64	10	0	4	29	6	44	0
Kleinknecht, Barrett (INF)	.301	53	219	33	66	17	0	5	35	5	25	6
Mowry, Jason (OF)	.223	55	193	20	43	8	2	2	20	18	29	3
Odreman, Alberto (1B)	.225	33	89	10	20	6	1	2	12	9	25	1
Rauh, Bobby (OF)	.321	20	56	15	18	3	0	2	8	8	13	3
Reyes, Elmer (2B)	.294	53	194	27	57	15	2	5	24	7	36	2
Rohm, David (OF)	.319	17	69	10	22	6	0	0	9	3	9	2
Simmons, Andrelton (SS)	.276	62	239	36	66	11	1	2	26	16	14	18
Terdoslavich, Joseph (1B/3B)	.296	49	189	27	56	10	2	2	24	15	27	0
Whitmer, Jace (C)	.278	22	72	7	20	4	0	1	11	6	9	0
Wiley, Keenan (OF)	.328	20	67	7	22	4	0	0	7	4	9	3

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acord, Dalton	2-1	2.79	11	0	3	19.1	15	6	6	15	32	.208
Farrell, Kyle	5-3	4.04	14	10	1	64.2	67	32	29	7	47	.265
Filak, David	0-2	2.42	10	8	0	26.0	18	7	7	11	27	.198
Hayes, Jamie	0-0	6.38	10	0	0	18.1	23	13	13	8	18	.303
Jurik, Dan	0-2	5.09	4	4	0	23.0	21	13	13	6	14	.247
Kempf, Willie	2-0	1.91	5	4	0	28.1	17	6	6	2	28	.177
La Point, Lucas	4-3	4.47	11	5	0	56.1	59	33	28	9	41	.272
Lewis, Matthew	0-3	13.25	12	0	0	17.2	28	35	26	25	13	.359
Mora, Edgison	0-2	4.55	12	0	2	27.2	28	16	14	14	25	.267
Northcraft, Aaron	6-1	2.73	10	9	0	52.2	44	18	16	9	38	.228
Pacheco, Ronan	4-6	5.62	14	11	2	57.2	72	42	36	18	59	.308
Perez, Carlos	2-0	1.13	6	6	0	32.0	20	8	4	14	27	.185
Sims, Blaine	0-3	4.19	5	2	0	19.1	23	9	9	4	10	.303
Stovall, Tyler	1-0	2.70	12	0	0	23.1	17	13	7	19	22	.210
Susach, Matthew	2-3	6.07	16	0	4	29.2	33	25	20	7	30	.282
Weber, Ryan	3-2	2.81	8	6	0	41.2	32	14	13	3	36	.212

**GULF COAST****27-31****GULF COAST LEAGUE**
ROOKIE**5TH PLACE, NORTH DIVISION**

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Beckwith, William (1B)	.243	21	70	8	17	4	0	2	18	12	13	4
Brownstein, Cory (C)	.287	34	94	17	27	3	2	2	14	16	11	1
Cadette, Victor (OF)	.225	48	151	18	34	5	1	2	10	16	34	7
De Los Santos, Fernando (INF)	.250	49	140	20	35	7	2	0	8	10	35	2
De Los Santos, Ramon (C)	.157	26	70	9	11	3	0	2	6	3	16	1
Drury, Brandon (3B)	.198	52	192	20	38	7	1	3	17	9	50	2
Falcon, Daniel (1B/OF)	.271	34	133	18	36	9	0	3	18	6	28	9
Fleming, Kurt (OF)	.262	44	164	23	43	4	2	4	15	9	20	8
Franco, Carlos (3B)	.123	23	65	9	8	1	0	2	5	8	24	1
Lipka, Matt (SS)	.302	48	192	33	58	8	4	1	24	14	22	20
Marin, Ivan (2B)	.297	32	64	13	19	2	0	1	9	7	15	3
Pigott, Jonathan (OF)	.333	14	33	3	11	3	0	0	3	2	7	0
Query, Ryan (C)	.244	28	82	11	20	3	1	5	16	1	18	0
Rivera, Wilson (OF)	.219	51	151	15	33	7	3	1	17	15	37	6
Rohm, David (OF)	.320	19	75	10	24	3	1	1	15	8	7	1
Sanchez, Edison (1B/3B)	.236	30	89	9	21	6	0	1	11	17	28	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Alvarez, Danilo	1-1	2.21	14	0	0	20.1	12	5	5	5	19	.169
Burns, Jonathan	1-3	3.86	17	0	2	23.1	27	10	10	5	24	.290
Castillo, Eduardo	1-3	4.95	8	7	0	36.1	41	21	20	12	20	.297
De Luna, Luis	2-0	3.30	9	4	1	30.0	34	13	11	9	21	.281
Foster, Stephen	2-1	3.65	15	0	0	24.2	24	10	10	10	17	.258
Gaxiola, Amilcar	0-3	3.95	16	0	0	27.1	24	15	12	7	26	.238
Hess, Tyler	2-3	5.92	9	3	1	24.1	19	17	16	11	23	.213
Jurik, Dan	3-0	2.20	7	5	0	28.2	23	10	7	5	27	.219
Kempf, Willie	2-0	.00	3	1	0	11.0	6	0	0	3	12	.158
Marshall, Ian	3-2	5.03	10	7	0	39.1	50	27	22	8	26	.314
Perez, Williams	0-6	5.63	12	11	0	54.1	66	36	34	8	43	.304
Pinto, Alexis	0-1	7.94	10	0	0	11.1	21	13	10	5	12	.404
Sekiguchi, Shohei	1-1	3.77	8	0	0	14.1	17	8	6	3	10	.304
Silva, Ernesto	2-1	4.57	8	2	0	21.2	30	15	11	8	14	.337
Winnie, Dan	4-2	5.79	14	10	0	42.0	52	32	27	15	35	.306
Yamarin, Yoshinori	2-2	5.65	15	1	0	28.2	35	19	18	13	27	.307

third-round draft pick in June, was placed on the disabled list with right elbow tendinitis on Aug. 16 and did not return to the lineup the rest of the season.

**DANVILLE**

ROOKIE ADVANCED

THE D-BRAVES finished the season with a 34-34 record and narrowly missed earning the wild-card playoff spot in the Appalachian League's East Division. Danville ranked second in the league with a team batting average of .277 and was sixth with a staff ERA of 3.88...

Shortstop **Andrelton Simmons**, Atlanta's supplemental second-round draft pick in June out of Western Oklahoma State Junior College, tied for second in the league with 18 stolen bases and was the toughest player in the league to strike out, with only one whiff per 19.21 plate appearances. Simmons concluded the season with a 10-game hitting streak, going 17-for-38 to raise his batting average from .244 to .276...

Catcher **Ryan Delgado** received the Appalachian League's final Player of the Week award of the season, representing Aug. 23-29...

Five D-Braves had three or more hits in a 10-1 victory at Greeneville on Aug. 25.

Danville stroked 21 hits in the contest, led by Andrelton Simmons and outfielder **Keenan Wiley**, who both went 4-for-5...

Second baseman **Elmer Reyes** went 5-for-5, recording two doubles, two singles, a triple and two RBIs, in an 8-1 win over Kingsport on Aug. 23. Earlier that morning, several members of the team were at Dan River Middle School to help raise money for the Joe Hill Fund. Hill is an eighth-grader at the school who is battling acute myelogenous leukemia at Duke University Medical Center.

**GULF COAST**

ROOKIE

THE BRAVES finished the season in fifth place in the GCL North Division with a 27-31 record. The team ranked eighth in the league with a .247 batting average and 14th with a 4.36 ERA...

Pitcher **Luis DeLuna** finished the season on a strong note with a pair of victories in his last two outings. The 20-year-old righthander from the Dominican Republic allowed only one run and six hits while striking out six batters in his final 10 innings of work. Overall, DeLuna went 2-0 with a 3.30 ERA and one save in nine outings, including four starts...

Shortstop **Matt Lipka**, Atlanta's first-

round draft pick this year, put together an impressive start to his professional career. Lipka ranked second in the league with 58 hits, tied for second with 20 stolen bases, and placed fifth with a .302 batting average. He also had a team-best 24 RBIs prior to his late-season promotion to Danville...

Outfielder **Kurt Fleming** hit .320 (24-for-78) with eight multi-hit games in August to increase his batting average from .213 to .262 during the season's last month...

Outfielder/first baseman **Daniel Falcon** had 10 multi-hit efforts in his 34 games in the GCL this season... Pitcher **Danilo Alvarez** limited opponents to a .169 batting average while striking out 19 hitters in 20 1/3 innings prior to a late-season promotion to Danville.

ORGANIZATIONAL

The Braves signed 34 of 51 draft picks, including their first 17 selections and 25 of their first 30...

The roster for the new session at the Braves' European Academy in Spain's Canary Islands includes: four Russians, one Bulgarian, four Germans, one Austrian, two Italians, 15 mainland Spaniards, and 15 players from Tenerife, where the academy is located.

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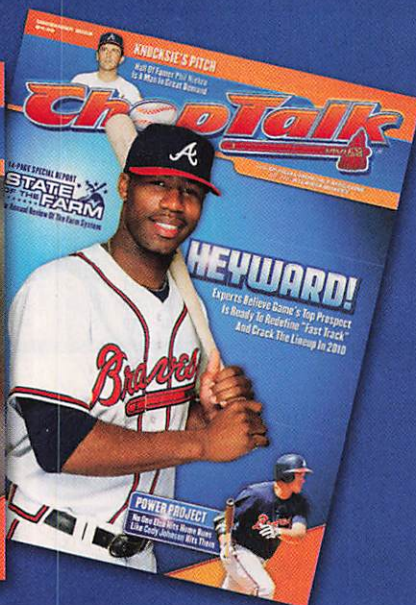
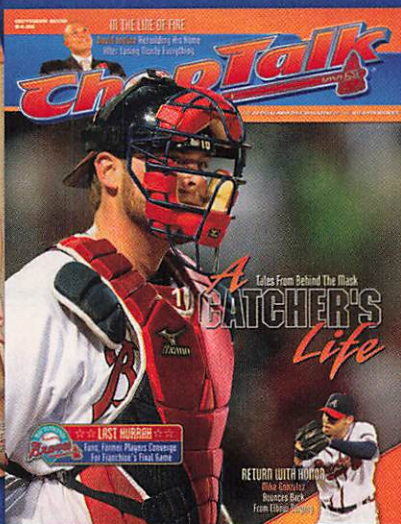
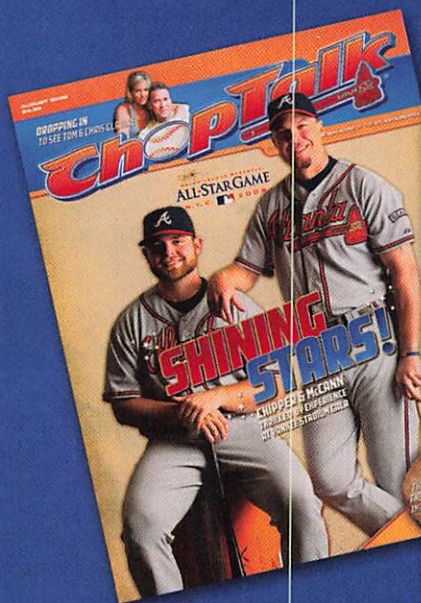


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December 2006 Jeff Francoeur
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December 2009 Jason Heyward
January 2010 Billy Wagner
February 2010 Jair Jurrjens
March 2010 Derek Lowe
April 2010 Bobby Cox
May 2010 Jason Heyward
June 2010 Martin Prado
July 2010 Tim Hudson
August 2010 Brian McCann
September 2010 Brooks Conrad

INDIVIDUAL STATS

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 12

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
BATTERS																	
INFANTE	.342	116	398	60	136	13	2	7	40	174	24	53	6	6	.377	.437	15
PRADO	.315	127	549	97	173	38	3	15	65	262	37	78	5	3	.358	.477	10
HEYWARD	.289	124	457	80	132	29	4	17	68	220	77	115	9	6	.399	.481	4
ROSS	.281	56	114	14	32	10	2	2	27	52	19	27	0	1	.385	.456	4
McCANN	.276	126	421	58	116	22	0	20	74	198	66	85	5	1	.382	.470	11
GONZALEZ*	.274	54	201	24	55	13	2	5	31	87	12	36	0	2	.330	.433	8
JONES	.265	95	317	47	84	21	0	10	46	135	61	47	5	0	.381	.426	10
RIGHT	.245		110		27	5	0	4	9	44	21	14			.366	.400	
LEFT	.275		207		57	16	0	6	37	91	40	33			.388	.440	
LEE*	.260	22	73	7	19	7	0	1	12	29	10	17	0	0	.349	.397	0
CABRERA	.255	138	428	46	109	26	3	4	40	153	39	59	7	1	.316	.357	4
RIGHT	.228		136		31	9	1	1	7	45	15	16			.309	.331	
LEFT	.267		292		78	17	2	3	33	108	24	43			.320	.370	
HINSKE	.251	119	271	36	68	20	1	10	47	120	32	74	0	0	.333	.443	2
CONRAD	.244	92	131	27	32	10	0	7	27	63	15	39	5	0	.327	.481	4
RIGHT	.276		29		8	3	0	0	6	11	5	9			.382	.379	
LEFT	.235		102		24	7	0	7	21	52	10	30			.310	.510	
GLAUS	.240	120	404	51	97	18	0	16	71	163	61	98	0	0	.342	.403	9
DIAZ	.237	73	194	23	46	15	1	7	29	84	10	42	3	1	.284	.433	2
ANKIEL*	.207	34	92	15	19	4	1	1	7	28	13	36	1	1	.311	.304	2
MCLOUTH	.189	71	206	26	39	10	1	5	21	66	28	49	5	2	.296	.320	1
HERNANDEZ	.111	16	9	5	1	0	0	1	1	4	0	4	0	0	.111	.444	0
FREEMAN	.077	10	13	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	.077	.077	0
ATLANTA	.262	144	4,883	679	1,278	279	21	128	643	1,983	564	1,014	57	27	.342	.406	111
OPPONENTS	.247	144	4,791	560	1,183	238	32	110	530	1,815	440	1,072	86	41	.314	.379	92

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Heyward (.667-2-0-2), McLouth (.500-3-0-0), Ankiel (.500-1-0-0), Jones (.429-3-0-3), McCann (.300-3-1-5), Cabrera (.273-3-0-0), Hinske (.270-10-2-8), Infante (.250-3-0-1), Conrad (.245-13-3-12), Diaz (.190-4-1-3), Hernandez (.125-1-1-1), Glauz (.100-1-0-0), Ross (.000-0-0-2), Freeman (.000-0-0-0), Lee (.000-0-0-0). **TEAM** (.246-48-8-37).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Hudson (.203-14-0-3), Medlen (.185-5-0-2), Lowe (.130-6-0-3), Kawakami (.125-3-0-1), Hanson (.109-6-0-4), Jurrjens (.105-4-0-2), Dunn (.000-0-0-0), Martinez (.000-0-0-0), Minor (.000-0-0-0), Saito (.000-0-0-0), Venters (.000-0-0-0). **STAFF** (.062-17-0-15).

KEY

AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors, W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
PITCHERS																
DUNN	1-0	0.00	16	0	4	0	113.1	7	0	0	0	0	14	17	1	.156
KIMBREL	3-0	0.73	12	0	4	0	12.1	5	2	1	0	0	11	23	1	.114
WAGNER	7-2	1.50	62	0	56	33	60	34	12	10	5	3	18	83	2	.164
VENTERS	4-2	1.86	67	0	15	1	72.2	48	23	15	1	5	33	82	4	.188
O'FLAHERTY	3-2	2.38	53	0	7	0	41.2	35	13	11	2	1	16	35	2	.229
SAITO	2-3	2.60	53	0	14	1	52	39	18	15	4	0	14	67	2	.201
HUDSON	15-8	2.62	30	30	0	0	203	167	61	59	14	7	62	122	5	.228
MOYLAN	6-2	3.20	74	0	7	1	56.1	50	21	20	4	2	33	45	3	.249
HANSON	9-11	3.54	30	30	0	0	178	164	81	70	13	13	50	156	3	.244
MEDLEN	6-2	3.68	31	14	5	0	107.2	108	48	44	13	3	21	83	1	.267
MARTINEZ	0-0	3.80	16	0	8	0	23.2	24	10	10	3	0	3	18	1	.264
LOWE	12-12	4.42	29	29	0	0	169	182	85	83	17	4	58	109	4	.279
JURRJENS	7-5	4.53	19	19	0	0	111.1	111	59	56	11	2	41	83	2	.263
FARNSWORTH*	0-1	5.14	16	0	5	0	14	13	8	8	1	0	5	19	1	.245
KAWAKAMI	1-10	5.15	18	16	1	0	87.1	98	57	50	10	1	32	59	4	.284
MINOR	3-0	5.63	6	6	0	0	32	40	21	20	4	1	8	35	0	.305
PROCTOR	0-0	6.75	4	0	0	0	4	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	.214
ATLANTA	82-62	3.61	144	144	142	36	1,280.1	1,183	560	513	110	43	440	1,072	36	.247
OPPONENTS	62-82	4.28	144	144	140	32	1,271	1,278	679	605	128	47	564	1,014	50	.262

* With Atlanta only

BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
1	4/5	CHC	H	W	16-5	Lowe (1-0)	Heyward (1), McCann (1)	1-0	T-1	—
2	4/7	CHC	H	W	3-2	Moylan (1-0)	Jones (1)	2-0	T-1	—
3	4/8	CHC	H	L	0-2	Hanson (0-1)	—	2-1	T-1	—
4	4/9	SF	A	L	4-5 (13)	Medlen (0-1)	—	2-2	3	-1
5	4/10	SF	A	W	7-2	Lowe (2-0)	Heyward (2)	3-2	2	-1
6	4/11	SF	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (0-1)	McCann (2), Heyward (3)	3-3	3	-2
7	4/12	SD	A	L	2-17	Jurrjens (0-1)	—	3-4	3	-3
8	4/14	SD	A	W	6-1	Hanson (1-1)	Glaus (1)	4-4	3	-3
9	4/15	SD	A	W	6-2	Hudson (1-0)	Prado (1)	5-4	T-2	-2
10	4/16	COL	H	W	9-5	Lowe (3-0)	Jones (2)	6-4	2	-2
11	4/17	COL	H	L	0-4	Kawakami (0-2)	--	6-5	T-3	-2
12	4/18	COL	H	W	4-3	O'Flaherty (1-0)	--	7-5	3	-1
13	4/20	PHI	H	W	4-3 (10)	Wagner (1-0)	Glaus (2), Heyward (4), McLouth (1)	8-5	1	T-1
14	4/21	PHI	H	L	0-2	Hudson (1-1)	--	8-6	2	-1
15	4/22	PHI	H	L	3-8	Lowe (3-1)	--	8-7	3	-2
16	4/23	NYM	A	L	2-5	Kawakami (0-3)	--	8-8	4	-2
17	4/24	NYM	A	L	1-3	Jurrjens (0-2)	--	8-9	5	-3
18	4/25	NYM	A	L	0-1	Hanson (1-2)	--	8-10	5	-3
19	4/26	STL	A	L	3-4	Saito (0-1)	--	8-11	5	-3
20	4/27	STL	A	L	4-5	Lowe (3-2)	--	8-12	5	-3 ½
21	4/28	STL	A	L	0-6	Kawakami (0-4)	--	8-13	5	-4 ½
22	4/29	STL	A	L	4-10	Jurrjens (0-3)	Heyward (5)	8-14	5	-4 ½
23	4/30	HOU	H	W	4-2	Hanson (2-2)	McLouth (2), Heyward (6)	9-14	5	-5
24	5/1	HOU	H	W	10-1	Hudson (2-1)	Heyward (7)	10-14	5	-4
25	5/2	HOU	H	W	7-1	Lowe (4-2)	--	11-14	5	-3 ½
26	5/4	WAS	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (0-5)	Heyward (8)	11-15	5	-4
27	5/5	WAS	A	W	7-6 (10)	Medlen (1-1)	Infante (1)	12-15	5	-4
28	5/6	WAS	A	L	2-3 (10)	O'Flaherty (1-1)	--	12-16	5	-5
29	5/7	PHI	A	L	0-7	Lowe (4-3)	--	12-17	5	-6
30	5/8	PHI	A	W	4-1	O'Flaherty (2-1)	--	13-17	5	-5
31	5/9	PHI	A	L	3-5	Kawakami (0-6)	--	13-18	5	-6
32	5/10	MIL	A	W	8-2	Hanson (3-2)	Glaus (3), Prado (2)	14-18	5	-6
33	5/11	MIL	A	W	11-3	Hudson (3-1)	Glaus (4), Conrad (1)	15-18	5	-5 ½
34	5/12	MIL	A	W	9-2	Lowe (5-3)	Conrad (2)	16-18	T-4	-4 ½
35	5/14	ARZ	H	W	6-5	Wagner (2-0)	McCann (3), McLouth (3)	17-18	5	-4 ½
36	5/15	ARZ	H	L	1-11	Hanson (3-3)	--	17-19	5	-5 ½
37	5/16	ARZ	H	W	13-1	Hudson (4-1)	Prado 2 (4), Glaus (5), Hinske (1)	18-19	4	-5 ½
38	5/17	NYM	H	L	2-3	Lowe (5-4)	Hinske (2)	18-20	5	-6 ½
39	5/18	NYM	H	W	3-2	Wagner (3-0)	Glaus (6)	19-20	4	-5 ½
40	5/19	CIN	H	W	5-4	Wagner (4-0)	McCann (4)	20-20	4	-4 ½
41	5/20	CIN	H	W	10-9	Kimbrel (1-0)	Conrad (3)	21-20	3	-4 ½
42	5/21	PIT	A	W	7-0	Hudson (5-1)	Heyward (9), McCann (5)	22-20	2	-4 ½
43	5/22	PIT	A	W	4-2	Lowe (6-4)	Cabrera (1), Hinske (3)	23-20	2	-3 ½
44	5/23	PIT	A	L	2-3 (10)	Saito (0-2)	Hinske (4)	23-21	2	-3 ½
45	5/25	FLA	A	L	4-6	Kawakami (0-7)	--	23-22	3	-3 ½
46	5/26	FLA	A	W	7-3	Hanson (4-3)	--	24-22	2	-2 ½

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
47	5/27	FLA	A	W	8-3	Moylan (2-0)	--	25-22	2	-1 ½
48	5/28	PIT	H	W	7-3	Lowe (7-4)	--	26-22	2	-1 ½
49	5/29	PIT	H	W	6-3	Medlen (2-1)	Heyward (10)	27-22	2	-1 ½
50	5/30	PIT	H	W	5-2	Saito (1-2)	Glaus (7)	28-22	2	-1/2
51	5/31	PHI	H	W	9-3	Hanson (5-3)	Jones (3), Glaus (8)	29-22	1	+1/2
52	6/1	PHI	H	W	7-3	Hudson (6-1)	Glaus (9)	30-22	1	+1 ½
53	6/2	PHI	H	W	2-1	Lowe (8-4)	--	31-22	1	+2 ½
54	6/3	LAD	A	W	4-3	Medlen (3-1)	Glaus (10)	32-22	1	+3
55	6/4	LAD	A	L	4-5	Kawakami (0-8)	--	32-23	1	+2
56	6/5	LAD	A	W	9-3	Hanson (6-3)	Glaus (11)	33-23	1	+2
57	6/6	LAD	A	L	4-5 (10)	Chavez (0-1)	Prado (5), McCann (6)	33-24	1	+2
58	6/7	ARZ	A	L	4-7	Lowe (8-5)	--	33-25	1	+2
59	6/8	ARZ	A	W	7-5	Venters (1-0)	--	34-25	1	+2
60	6/9	ARZ	A	L	1-2	Moylan (2-1)	--	34-26	1	+1 ½
61	6/10	ARZ	A	W	11-7	Moylan (3-1)	--	35-26	1	+2 ½
62	6/11	MIN	A	L	1-2	Hudson (6-2)	--	35-27	1	+1 ½
63	6/12	MIN	A	W	3-2	Venters (2-0)	Cabrera (2)	36-27	1	+1 ½
64	6/13	MIN	A	W	7-3	Medlen (4-1)	Prado (6), Glaus 2 (13)	37-27	1	+1 ½
65	6/15	TAM	H	L	4-10	Kawakami (0-9)	Jones (4)	37-28	1	+1/2
66	6/16	TAM	H	W	6-2	Hanson (7-3)	Hinske (5)	38-28	1	+1/2
67	6/17	TAM	H	W	3-1	Hudson (7-2)	Heyward (12)	39-28	1	+1/2
68	6/18	KC	H	W	6-4	Lowe (9-5)	--	40-28	1	+1/2
69	6/19	KC	H	W	5-4	Wagner (5-0)	McCann (7), Glaus (14)	41-28	1	+1 ½
70	6/20	KC	H	W	8-5	Kimbrel (2-0)	--	42-28	1	+2 ½
71	6/22	CWS	A	L	6-9	Hanson (7-4)	Prado (7), McCann (8)	42-29	1	+1 ½
72	6/23	CWS	A	L	2-4	Hudson (7-3)	--	42-30	1	+1/2
73	6/24	CWS	A	L	0-2	Saito (1-3)	--	42-31	1	+1/2
74	6/25	DET	H	W	3-1	Medlen (5-1)	McCann (9), Conrad (4)	43-31	1	+1/2
75	6/26	DET	H	W	4-3	Kawakami (1-9)	Jones (5)	44-31	1	+1 ½
76	6/27	DET	H	L	4-10	Hanson (7-5)	--	44-32	1	+1/2
77	6/28	WAS	H	W	5-0	Hudson (8-3)	--	45-32	1	+1 ½
78	6/29	WAS	H	L	2-7	Lowe (9-6)	--	45-33	1	+1 ½
79	6/30	WAS	H	W	4-1	Jurrjens (1-3)	--	46-33	1	+1 ½
80	7/2	FLA	H	W	4-3 (11)	Venters (3-0)	--	47-33	1	+2
81	7/3	FLA	H	W	4-1	Hanson (8-5)	--	48-33	1	+3
82	7/4	FLA	H	L	2-3	Hudson (8-4)	McCann (10)	48-34	1	+2
83	7/5	PHI	A	L	1-3	Lowe (9-7)	Jones (6)	48-35	1	+2
84	7/6	PHI	A	W	6-3 (11)	Chavez (1-1)	Prado (8), Hinske (6)	49-35	1	+2
85	7/7	PHI	A	W	7-5	Medlen (6-1)	Prado 2 (10), Diaz (1)	50-35	1	+3
86	7/9	NYM	A	W	4-2	O'Flaherty (3-1)	Cabrera (3), Infante (2)	51-35	1	+4
87	7/10	NYM	A	W	4-0	Hudson (9-4)	--	52-35	1	+5
88	7/11	NYM	A	L	0-3	Lowe (9-8)	--	52-36	1	+4
89	7/15	MIL	H	W	2-1	Jurrjens (2-3)	Prado (11), Jones (7)	53-36	1	+5
90	7/16	MIL	H	L	3-9	Hanson (8-6)	--	53-37	1	+5
91	7/17	MIL	H	L	3-6	Hudson (9-5)	Diaz (2), Hinske (7)	53-38	1	+4 ½
92	7/18	MIL	H	W	11-6	Lowe (10-8)	McCann (11), Diaz (3)	54-38	1	+5
93	7/20	SD	H	W	4-1	Jurrjens (3-3)	Diaz (4)	55-38	1	+6 ½
94	7/21	SD	H	L	4-6 (12)	Medlen (6-2)	McCann (12)	55-39	1	+6 ½
95	7/22	SD	H	W	8-0	Hudson (10-5)	--	56-39	1	+7
96	7/23	FLA	A	L	6-7	Wagner (5-1)	Prado (12), McCann (13)	56-40	1	+6

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
97	7/24	FLA	A	W	10-5	Chavez (2-1)	Prado (13), Conrad (5)	57-40	1	+6
98	7/25	FLA	A	L	4-5 (11)	Chavez (2-2)	Hinske (8)	57-41	1	+5
99	7/27	WAS	A	L	0-3	Hanson (8-7)	--	57-42	1	+3 1/2
100	7/28	WAS	A	W	1-3	Hudson (11-5)	--	58-42	1	+3 1/2
101	7/29	WAS	A	L	3-5	Lowe (10-9)	Diaz (5)	58-43	1	+2 1/2
102	7/30	CIN	A	W	6-4 (10)	Chavez (3-2)	McCann (14)	59-43	1	+3 1/2
103	7/31	CIN	A	L	2-5	Jurrjens (3-4)	--	59-44	1	+3 1/2
104	8/1	CIN	A	L	1-2	Hanson (8-8)	Gonzalez (18)	59-45	1	+2 1/2
105	8/2	NYM	H	W	4-1	Hudson (12-5)	Jones (8)	60-45	1	+3
106	8/3	NYM	H	L	2-3	Wagner (5-2)	--	60-46	1	+2
107	8/4	NYM	H	W	8-3	Dunn (1-0)	Jones (9), McCann (15), Cabrera (4)	61-46	1	+2
108	8/5	SF	H	W	3-2	Jurrjens (4-4)	Gonzalez (19), Hinske (9)	62-46	1	+2
109	8/6	SF	H	L	2-3 (11)	Moylan (3-2)	Gonzalez (20), Jones (10)	62-47	1	+1
110	8/7	SF	H	W	3-0	Hudson (13-5)	--	63-47	1	+2
111	8/8	SF	H	W	6-3	Lowe (11-9)	Ross (1), Infante (3)	64-47	1	+2
112	8/9	HOU	A	L	4-10	Farnsworth (3-1)	Heyward (12), McCann (16)	64-48	1	+1 1/2
113	8/10	HOU	A	W	4-2	Venters (4-0)	Conrad (6), Glaus (15)	65-48	1	+2 1/2
114	8/11	HOU	A	W	8-2 (10)	Wagner (6-2)	McCann (17)	66-48	1	+2 1/2
115	8/13	LAD	H	W	1-0	Hudson (14-5)	Conrad (7)	67-48	1	+3
116	8/14	LAD	H	L	1-2	Lowe (11-10)	--	67-49	1	+2
117	8/15	LAD	H	W	13-1	Jurrjens (5-4)	Glaus (16)	68-49	1	+2
118	8/16	LAD	H	W	4-3	Moylan (4-2)	--	69-49	1	+2 1/2
119	8/17	WAS	H	W	10-2	Minor (1-0)	Hernandez (1)	70-49	1	+2 1/2
120	8/18	WAS	H	W	3-2	Wagner (7-2)	--	71-49	1	+2 1/2
121	8/19	WAS	H	L	2-6	Lowe (11-11)	--	71-50	1	+2 1/2
122	8/20	CHC	A	W	5-3	Moylan (5-2)	Infante (4)	72-50	1	+2 1/2
123	8/21	CHC	A	L	4-5	Hanson (8-9)	--	72-51	1	+2 1/2
124	8/22	CHC	A	W	16-5	Minor (2-0)	Infante 2 (6), Heyward 2 (14)	73-51	1	+2 1/2
125	8/23	COL	A	L	4-5	Venters (4-1)	Prado (14), Ankiel (5)	73-52	1	+2 1/2
126	8/24	COL	A	L	2-5	Lowe (11-12)	Gonzalez (21)	73-53	1	+2 1/2
127	8/25	COL	A	L	10-12	Venters (4-2)	Infante (7)	73-54	1	+2 1/2
128	8/27	FLA	H	L	1-7	Hanson (8-10)	Heyward (15)	73-55	1	+2
129	8/28	FLA	H	W	12-3	Hudson (15-5)	Diaz (6), Hinske (10), Prado (15)	74-55	1	+2
130	8/29	FLA	H	W	7-6	Saito (2-3)	Diaz (7), McCann (18)	75-55	1	+2
131	8/30	NYM	H	W	9-3	Jurrjens (6-4)	Heyward (16), McCann (19)	76-55	1	+3
132	8/31	NYM	H	W	9-2	Minor (3-0)	Ross (2)	77-55	1	+3
133	9/1	NYM	H	W	4-1	Hanson (9-10)	--	78-55	1	+3
134	9/2	NYM	H	L	2-4	Hudson (15-6)	McCann (20)	78-56	1	+2
135	9/3	FLA	A	L	1-6	Kawakami (1-10)	--	78-57	1	+1
136	9/4	FLA	A	W	2-0	Jurrjens (7-4)	--	79-57	1	+1
137	9/5	FLA	A	L	6-7 (10)	O'Flaherty (3-2)	--	79-58	1	+1
138	9/6	PIT	A	L	1-3	Hanson (9-11)	--	79-59	1	+1
139	9/7	PIT	A	L	0-5	Hudson (15-7)	--	79-60	2	-1/2
140	9/8	PIT	A	W	9-3	Lowe (12-12)	--	80-60-	2	-1/2
141	9/9	STL	H	L	4-11	Jurrjens (7-5)	Lee (17)	80-61	2	-1
142	9/10	STL	H	W	8-6	Moylan (6-2)	McLouth (4)	81-61	2	-1
143	9/11	STL	H	W	6-3 (12)	Kimbrel (3-0)	Heyward (17), Gonzalez (22)	82-61	T-1	--
144	9/12	STL	H	L	3-7	Hudson (15-8)	McLouth (5)	82-62	2	-1

MLB

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LOCATION	PRICE	PREMIUM*
Skyline#	\$1	\$1
Upper Pavilion	\$6	\$8
Upper Reserved	\$8	\$12
Upper Box	\$12	\$16
Terrace Reserved	\$24	\$28
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$24	\$28
Field Reserved	\$28	\$32
Golden Moon Casino Pavilion	\$28	\$32
Terrace Level	\$36	\$40
Field Level	\$38	\$42
Golden Moon Casino Level	\$44	\$48
Dugout Level	\$64	\$68
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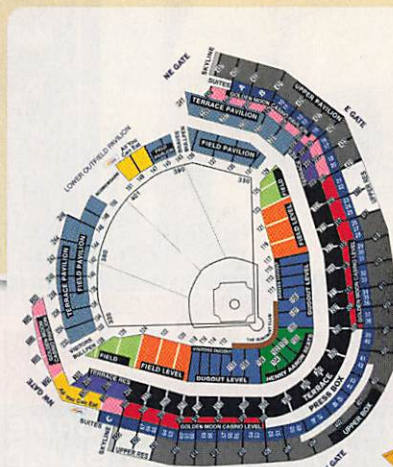
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*Premium games include all Friday and Saturday games.

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Tickets for the Braves National League Division Series are on sale. Division Series ticket prices range from \$15-\$80.

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2010 SCHEDULE

SEPT. | OCT. | NOV.

HOME AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 1:30 WAS FSS	27 7:00 FLA SS	28 7:00 FLA SS	29 4:30 FLA SS	30	1 7:30 PHI SS	2 4:10 PHI FOX
3 1:30 PHI FSS	4	5	6 TBD NLDS TBS	7 TBD NLDS TBS	8 TBD NLDS TBS	9 TBD NLDS TBS
10 TBD NLDS TBS	11 TBD NLDS TBS	12 TBD NLDS TBS	13 TBD NLDS TBS	14	15 TBD NLCS FOX	16 TBD NLCS FOX
17 TBD NLCS FOX	18 TBD NLCS FOX	19 TBD NLCS FOX	20 TBD NLCS FOX	21 TBD NLCS FOX	22 TBD NLCS FOX	23 TBD NLCS FOX
24 TBD NLCS FOX	25	26	27 TBD WS FOX	28 TBD WS FOX	29	30 TBD WS FOX
31 TBD WS FOX	1 TBD WS* FOX	2	3 TBD WS* FOX	4 TBD WS* FOX		

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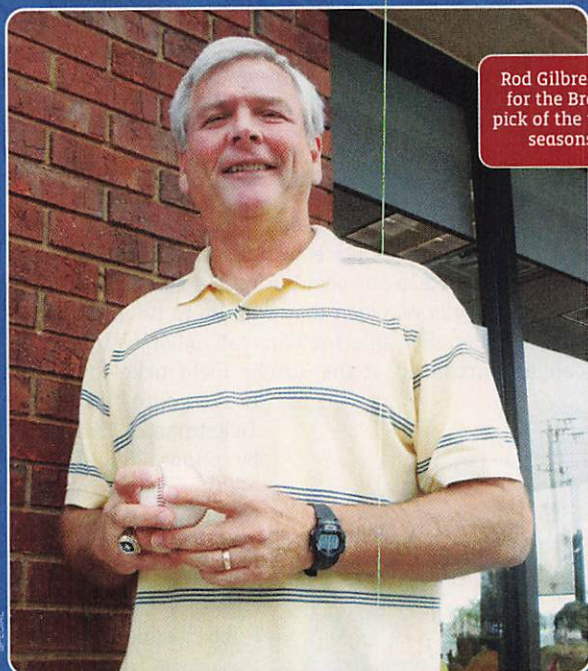
FOX FOX

ESPN ESPN

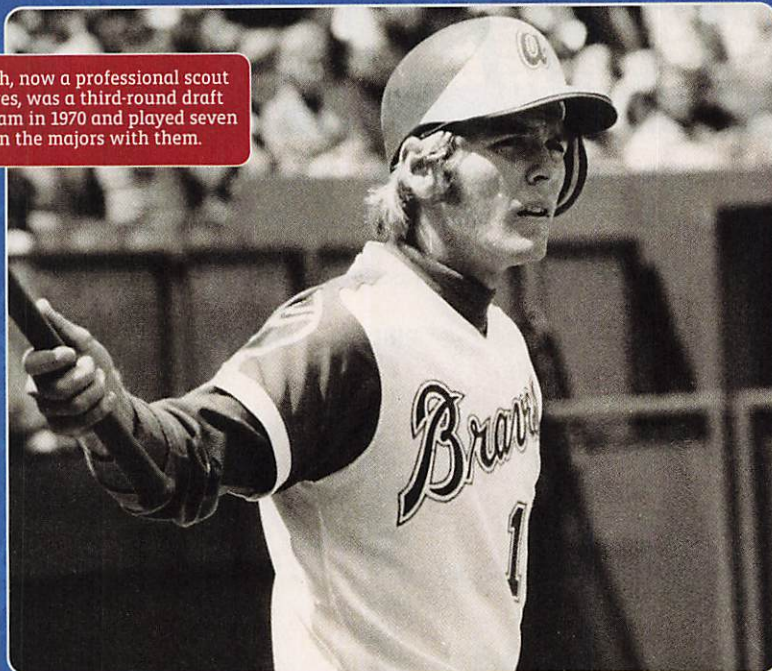
POST-SEASON DATES ARE TENTATIVE, UNOFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*If Necessary

NL HOME GAME AL HOME GAME



Rod Gilbreath, now a professional scout for the Braves, was a third-round draft pick of the team in 1970 and played seven seasons in the majors with them.



A TRUSTED EYE

FOR OVER 30 YEARS, FORMER INFIELDER ROD GILBREATH HAS HELPED BUILD THE ORGANIZATION

BY BRIAN KNAPP

ROD GILBREATH'S LOVE for the Atlanta Braves runs almost as deep as his love for the game of baseball itself. How else can one explain the more than three decades he's spent in service to the tomahawk as a player, executive and scout?

At 58, Gilbreath shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon. As a professional scout for the Braves, his coverage area encompasses spring training, the Class-A Florida State League, the Double-A Southern League, and some advanced scouting duties at the major league level. Once the curtain closes on the major league season, Gilbreath's attention turns to the winter leagues in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

"By that time, the season's over and you're ready to start again," he said. "Baseball's a full-time job, and it's all year. It never stops."

Gilbreath leaves the comforts of home two to three weeks at a time to scout for the Braves. Once in his element, he adheres to company philosophy, which revolves around focusing on the skill positions – shortstop, catcher and center field – and, most importantly, pitchers. He watches batting and infield practice before the actual game. Radar gun in hand, Gilbreath charts each pitch, its velocity and location, and keeps an attuned eye to how the pitcher handles his emotions.

"You're getting a good look at the pitcher," he said. "We're a pitching-oriented organization. Of course, that's no secret. We bear down on pitchers probably more than we do any other position on the field."

"You're just trying to look at all aspects of the game," Gilbreath added. "You have to be able to project a little bit."

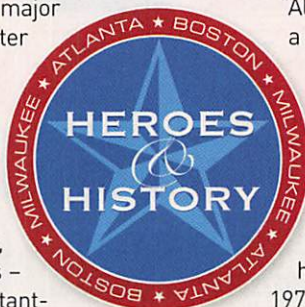
Gilbreath has worn many hats for the Braves, and experience serves as one of his greatest assets. Previously, he was an area scout for the state of Georgia, assistant scouting director, assistant director of player development, and director of minor league operations. A disciple of Braves Hall of Fame scout and executive Paul Snyder, Gilbreath has remained in his current role for the last decade.

"All the clubs look for the same thing, but you might like a player that I might not like," he said. "You might like his ability. I might not like his attitude. When you're looking at players nowadays, you just have to break it down to how much they enjoy playing baseball, what their ability is, and how you're going to project them onto the major league ballclub. You've got to be able to put tools together."

As one might suspect, Gilbreath leans heavily on his experiences as an infielder for the Braves from 1972-78.

"We all look at the same things, but I do believe that there is a little bit of an edge in there for a player who's played at the major league level – not that I do anything different than anyone else," he said. "It's a gut feeling that you have sometimes. It's hard to put an explanation on that. It's the same way in a draft room. When you're drafting, sometimes it comes down to a gut feeling on a guy."

A third-round draft choice by Atlanta in 1970, Gilbreath turned down a chance to play college football and instead signed with the



Braves. The Laurel, Miss., native compiled a respectable .277 batting average in the minor leagues and, in his third professional season, led the Southern League in steals (45). Gilbreath debuted in Atlanta three months before his 20th birthday, on June 17, 1972, and spent his entire major league career, much of it as a utility infielder, with the organization. In seven seasons with Atlanta, Gilbreath batted .248 in 500 games with 14 home runs and 125 runs batted in. He led the National League in sacrifices (20) in 1976.

"I was a blue-collar worker," Gilbreath said. "Things did not come easy for me. I was talented in certain ways. I could run, I could field, and I could throw. I played a number of positions. I signed as a shortstop and ended up playing third and second at the big-league level. I was a line-drive hitter. I didn't have enough power to play third, and I probably wasn't enough of a high average hitter to play second, so I ended up being more of a utility guy.

"I was a hustler," he added. "I was well-versed in the mechanics of the game, in how the game is supposed to be played. That's the way the game came to me. I knew where I could get better, and I knew where I couldn't get better. I knew my role."

An arm injury cut his career short and led to his release by the Braves on Mar. 30, 1979. A week later, Gilbreath signed with the Pirates and spent two years in their farm system before calling it a career at the end of the 1980 season.

"I enjoy the game still," said Gilbreath, who also served as a minor league manager for two years. "I'd get out and play right now if I was physically able to. When I got released back in '79, it hurt me so bad. [After I retired], I would wake up during the middle of the night just wanting to play. I'd have dreams that I was still playing in the big leagues. It was my life."

Gilbreath took a one-year break from the game following his retirement, working as a construction sales manager in Atlanta. It was Snyder who called him home, offering him a job as an area scout in 1982. He has remained a fixture in the Braves organization ever since.

Gilbreath and his wife of 38 years, Donna, reside in the Atlanta suburb of Lilburn. They have two sons, ages 29 and 33, and two granddaughters, ages 4 and 2. Gilbreath remains a Brave at heart.

"This was my team," he said. "This was the team that I chose in 1970 when I was drafted by the Braves. What a career and what fun I've had."

MAD ABOUT MADDUX AND THE 1990s TEAM

WITH FOUR LIKELY Hall of Famers in Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine, John Smoltz and Chipper Jones, there is no shortage of hot collectibles from the 1990s Braves.

Virtually a lock to join the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2014, Maddux draws the most interest. This past July, an autographed Braves jersey from Maddux sold for \$900 through Hunt Auctions. The game-used, gray road uniform, from the 1996-99 seasons, has the four-time Cy Young Award winner's signature on the front and back.

On eBay, a signed Maddux jersey, cap and baseball combination was selling for \$999. The seller, who preferred to stay anonymous, asked Maddux to sign his full name "Gregory Alan Maddux" on the baseball, which makes it an uncommon collectible.

Mike Coy of Dayton, Ohio, had trouble estimating the vast number of Maddux items in his collection, but said "thousands." He has autographed baseballs and baseball cards, parts of uniforms, and figurines.

"What got me started is that I just liked his whole attitude about pitching," said Coy. "He never gave in to anybody. He's not a Nolan Ryan or Roger Clemens, he's a pitcher. This guy would use his brain to get you out."

Kirby Roe, who lives in Northeast Arkansas, said he has 2,600 different Maddux baseball cards. His collection includes Maddux's coveted 1993 Finest Refractor card, which he purchased online. Only 241 of these cards were printed for each of the 199 players in the set. A 1993 Maddux Finest Refractor graded 10 PSA (Professional Sports Authenticator) – the highest possible quality – was selling for \$999 on eBay in late August.

"When I first started collecting Braves, I would pick up Ron Gant, Dave Justice, John Smoltz, Steve Avery, Tom Glavine and Mark Lemke cards," said Roe. "It was always fun to go to a local card show and spend a few dollars while looking for my favorite players. It was especially gratifying to pick up a card I did not have of those Braves players out of a bargain bin. I was like a kid in a candy store."

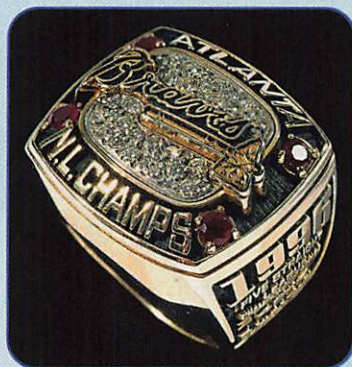
eBay also had a 1995 World Series Locker Room cap signed by both Avery and Glavine, the MVP for that series. It was selling for \$400 in late August.

Hunt Auctions had a rare Braves collectible in an auction held Sept. 16 in Chicago: A 1996 National League Championship ring (above) from a Braves staff member. The ring commemorates five straight NLCS appearances. It also has a relief of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium to mark the ballpark's final season. The estimated price for this item ranged from \$7,000 to \$10,000.

"Any time you get championship rings, whether it's World Championship, NL or AL, needless to say, they're highly desirable," said David Hunt, president of Hunt Auctions. "They almost always come from staff or front office members that sell them. Once in a while, you'll get a player, and they will bring quite a bit more. That particular year, for whatever reason, you don't see too many turn up. That's the first one we've ever had."

Hunt believes that 1990s Braves memorabilia will see a "bump" in value in the coming years.

"As they're reflected back upon, and as some of those players get into the Hall of Fame, I think it will gain in not only value, but as an understanding of how good they really were," said Hunt.





Hall of Famers Hank Aaron (L) and Robin Yount (R) flank MLB Commissioner Bud Selig at the unveiling of his statue in Milwaukee.

Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) and **Joe Torre** (C/1B, 1960-68, Manager, 1982-84) were among those at Milwaukee's Miller Park Aug. 24, to honor Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig at the dedication of a statue in his likeness.

Mark your calendars for the last Sunday in July in 2014 and 2015. **Greg Maddux** (RHP, 1993-2003) and **Tom Glavine** (LHP, 1987-2002, '08), if elected on the first ballot, will be inducted in to the National Baseball Hall of Fame July 27, 2014, at Cooperstown, N.Y. **John Smoltz** (RHP, 1988-99, 2001-08), if elected on the first ballot, will be inducted July 26, 2015.

Bobby Thomson (OF, 1954-57), who hit the perhaps most famous home run in history, died Aug. 16 at age 86 in Savannah, Ga. He hit the so-called "Shot Heard 'Round The World" in 1951 to allow the Giants to beat the

Dodgers in the third game of a best-of-three playoff for the National League pennant and a trip to the World Series. In 1954, the Giants traded Thomson to the Milwaukee Braves. He was to be a regular outfielder, but he broke his ankle in spring training and was out until July. The Braves chose to give his job to a 20-year-old rookie with less than two years of pro experience named Hank Aaron, thus launching one of the greatest careers in baseball history.

The Mets traded **Jeff Francoeur** (OF, 2005-09) and cash to the Texas Rangers Aug. 31, just before the deadline to be eligible for the post-season, in exchange for infielder Joaquin Arias.

Two sons of **Dale Murphy** (OF/C/1B, 1976-90) were in the football news recently. Jake Murphy, a 6-foot-5, 215-pound receiver who originally signed with BYU, returned from his Mormon mission to Australia and instead went to the University of Utah to play. He will redshirt this season. Jake's older brother, Shawn, an offensive guard originally a fourth-round draft pick of Miami in 2008, was signed to the practice squad by the Carolina Panthers.

Darrell Evans (3B/1B/OF, 1969-76, '89) shared memories from his 21-year baseball career in which he hit 414 home runs during the Great Lakes Loons (Class A) Detroit Tigers Legends series Aug. 19 at Dow Diamond in Midland, Mich.

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) signed autographs at the Sept. 8 opening of Ollie's Bargain Outlet in Charlotte, N.C.

Javy Lopez (C, 1992-2003) made an appearance in Myrtle Beach, S.C., Sept. 4, at the fifth Beach, Boogie, BBQ festival. Cooking competitions, music and water sport demonstrations were part of the festival's schedule.

BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER

1 ST	REMY HERMOSO (64) BUZZ CAPRA (63) PETE FALCONE (57) JEFF REARDON (55) ROBERTO KELLY (46) JOHN THOMSON (37)
2 ND	MIKE DE LA HOZ (72) PAUL DOYLE (71) TREY MOORE (38)
3 RD	BOB SKINNER (79) JIM BREAZEALE (61) JIMMY WILLIAMS (67)
4 TH	TONY LA RUSSA (66) DAVE SCHULER (57) CHARLIE LEIBRANDT (54) JOE BOEVER (50)
5 TH	REY SANCHEZ (43)
6 TH	GARY GENTRY (64) STEVE KLINE (63) CHARLIE VAUGHAN (63) TIM UNROE (40)
7 TH	KRIS MEDLEN (25)
8 TH	JIMMY KREMERS (45) JOE AYRAULT (39)
9 TH	JOE PEPITONE (70)
10 TH	LARRY MAXIE (70) FRANCISCO CABRERA (44) JOSH ANDERSON (28) GREGG OLSON (44)
11 TH	LUIS POLONIA (46) CHARLIE MORTON (27)
12 TH	FRANK LACORTE (59)
13 TH	RYAN CHURCH (32)
14 TH	LOU KLIMCHOCK (71)
15 TH	DAVID CORTES (37) JUAN CRUZ (32)
16 TH	LEO MAZZONE (62)
17 TH	MIKE SANDLOCK (95) BRIAN SNITKER (55) JOHN ROCKER (36) JOHN ENNIS (31)
18 TH	JERRY ROYSTER (58) TERRY CLARK (50) JEFF WETHERBY (47)
19 TH	SANDY ALOMAR, SR. (67) DAVID PALMER (53) MARK DAVIS (50) JASON SHIELL (34)
20 TH	RUDY SEANEZ (42)
21 ST	EDDIE CARNETT (94) JUAN EICHELBERGER (57) TIM SPOONEYBARGER (31) ANDY MARTE (27)
23 RD	CECIL BUTLER (73) BO MCLAUGHLIN (57) JIM PRESLEY (49)
24 TH	OMAR MORENO (58) RAFAEL BELLARD (49) STEVE ZIEM (49) MARK GRANT (47) MACAY MCBRIDE (28)
25 TH	ROY HARTSFIELD (85) SKIP GUINN (66) ROWLAND OFFICE (58) TOMMY BOGGS (55) JOE NELSON (36)
26 TH	ARMANDO ALMANZA (38) SCOTT SOBOKOWIAK (33)
27 TH	MIKE LUM (65) BARRY BONNELL (57) TERRY BELL (48) PEDRO SWANN (40) MARTIN PRADO (27) BRENT CLEVELAND (27)
28 TH	ANTHONY LEREW (28)
29 TH	NATE MCLOUTH (29)
30 TH	GARY NEIBAUER (66) GERALD PERRY (50) JOE JOHNSON (49)
31 ST	PAUL ZUVELLA (52) FRED MCGRIF (47)



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GARY CARUSO, President
Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

EDITORIAL

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Bobby Cox, Jason Heyward, Carolyn
Lowe, Patty Rasmussen, Ken Rosenthal
(FoxSports.com), Frank Wren
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PRODUCTION

ART DIRECTOR: Clark Odom

ADVERTISING

SALES:
Richard Burg (770) 978-6297
Doug Campbell (770) 815-7506

PRINTER

Publisher's Press

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

McMillen Communications

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Rob Calcutta

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send address changes or corrections to:
ChopTalk, P.O. Box 81247, Conyers, Ga.
30013-9247 or call 1-877-655-CHOP
[2467] or visit braves.com/choptalk.

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION

12829 Trinity Dr.
Stafford, TX 77477-4214
PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP [2467]
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OH! OH! OH-MAR!

IN BASEBALL, you win a lot - and you lose a lot. That's the case for every team. No matter how talented a team is, it will lose 60 games and probably more. That's a lot of heartache.

It's the nature of baseball, where even the best hitters fail more than two-thirds of the time. In many ways, baseball is a game of constant setbacks. The teams that neutralize those frustrations the best with positive results are the ones that win titles and championships.

At this writing, the Braves were in a tenuous position after losing two straight at home to the Gnats (Nats). Still with 15 games to play - six of them against the Phillies - anything was possible. Hopefully, by the time you read this, Bobby Cox's club will have neutralized some frustrations and taken control of the NL East again.

The roundabout point we're getting to is that the unpredictable, oft maddening, nature of baseball also pertains to the work of a general manager. The jury is still out on how Frank Wren's late-season acquisitions of Alex Gonzalez, Kyle Farnsworth, Rick Ankiel and Derrek Lee will stand up once all the Ws and Ls are counted.

In GM-ing, as well as in playing the game on the field, you win and you lose. That's the nature of dealing with the inexact science of human performance. Players have their ups and downs. They have injuries - some which keep them out of the lineup and others that they try to play through. They have personal issues, too, just like all other people. No GM has a crystal ball to analyze such variables.

But there should be no questioning that Wren, his staff and scouts are as hard-working, diligent, perceptive and resourceful as possible. The three late-season trades all appeared to properly address significant deficiencies on the field. In fact, they all seemed to be very prudent moves, especially considering Wren didn't mortgage the future.

As much as he played his cards to try to win this year, he smartly refused to give up top-tier talent in the farm system that other teams undoubtedly tried to pry from his hands.

Perhaps no other deal Wren has made in his three years as GM illustrates the unpre-

dictability of his task as much as the one he made Dec. 4, 2007, when he'd been on the job less than two months. At the time, it barely created a ripple of interest when the Braves sent right-handed pitcher Jose Ascanio to the Cubs in exchange for lefty reliever Will Ohman and utilityman Omar Infante.

Wren said at the time that Infante was an important acquisition that he called a "super utilityman." And we all thought, "Big deal... Where's the beef?"

Ascanio, now on Pittsburgh's disabled list, has yet to do anything. Ohman had possibly the best year of his career, appearing in 83 games for the 2008 Braves, and then left via free agency. Infante put in two and a half excellent seasons as a "super utilityman" and then exploded once he was given the opportunity to play every day when Chipper Jones was injured.

Of course, there is no way Wren could have envisioned in 2007 how important Infante would be on the first team he assembled to make a run at the division title. There's that unpredictability again. It works both ways. The bottom line is a GM has to do his homework meticulously and structure deals that work for his team's circumstances at the time. Wren does exactly that - time and again.

Both Kris Medlen and Chipper Jones are progressing well after season-ending surgery. Medlen had the big brace removed from his arm, according to Wren, and Chipper was walking without a limp and doing everything possible to help the team in the dugout and in the clubhouse.

There's always been a lot of speculation that once Fredi Gonzalez was fired by the Marlins this year he moved to the front of the line of candidates to replace Cox. That speculation increased in mid-September when Gonzalez declined to talk to the Cubs about their managerial vacancy. Whether it's Gonzalez or someone else, expect Wren to make a swift move after the season to name a new manager.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Sept. 22. The November issue will be mailed Oct. 22.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



"Celebrity" models from Girls Night Out at Turner Field, (L-R) Carrie Sellars, Viviana Venters, Lindsay Rolen, Meredith Sammons and Ashley McCann.

PROJECT RUNWAY



GIRLS NIGHT OUT at Turner Field was Sept. 10 and featured a fashion show with special guest models. **Viviana Venters**, wife of **Jonny**, **Meredith Sammons**, wife of Gwinnett Braves catcher **Clint Sammons**, and **Lindsay Rolen**, fiancée of **Nate McLouth**, walked the runway in fashions from Uptown Girl, an upscale boutique owned by **Ashley McCann (Brian)** and her sister-in-law, **Michelle Jarusinski**. **Carrie Sellars**, a friend of Ashley's, also modeled. **Ronnie Snitker** (third base coach **Brian**) and her daughter, **Erin**, modeled fashions from the Braves Clubhouse Collection. Over 400 tickets were sold for Girls Night Out which included special pre-game events, drink specials, and a Braves cap and red feather boa. The Braves donated \$5 of every Girls Night Out ticket sold to the American Heart Association's "Go Red For Women" campaign."

FORMER OUTFIELDER Brian Jordan was one of the featured authors at the Suwanee Festival of Books held Aug. 28 in the Atlanta suburb of Suwanee. Jordan (below) read from and signed his latest children's book "Overcoming the Fear of the Baseball." His earlier book is entitled, "I Told You I Could Play." Both books are available on the Brian Jordan Foundation website, brianjordanfoundation.com...

Tim Hudson is having a "beautiful" year on and off the field. He recently was named to Jezebel Magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People in Atlanta" list. The list will be published later this year, but Hudson was photographed for the spread in September. "I turned on some of my best 'Zoolander' poses," he said, referencing the movie spoof about the world of high fashion male models...

September callup **Freddie Freeman** enjoyed a Sept. 9-14 visit from his dad, **Fred**, and uncle, **Bruce Freeman**, who traveled from Southern California. They timed their visit to celebrate Freddie's 21st birthday, Sept. 12... **Ashley McCann (Brian)** and two friends took a week-long trip to Paris, Sept. 12-19...

Kara Spahn Jordan, granddaughter of Braves pitching legend **Warren Spahn**, received a special baseball-related 30th birthday gift when her husband, **Fred**, surprised her

with a weekend trip to Chicago which included a game between the Braves and Cubs at Wrigley Field. "Fred had done some research and found out that my grandfather won his 300th victory against the Cubs," said Kara. "He thought it would be appropriate for me to celebrate my 30th birthday there. It was my first time at Wrigley Field." The couple lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the trip was a complete surprise to Kara, who was told what to pack for the weekend getaway. Another surprise was in store when they arrived at Wrigley Field. Fred made arrangements, with assists from ChopTalk editor/publisher **Gary Caruso** and Braves director of team travel **Bill Acree**, for them to meet with another "Okie," Tulsa-born **Bobby Cox**. "He made sure to tell us that he was originally from Tulsa," said Kara. "It was such a thrill for me and for Fred, too..."



Kris Medlen has joined the ranks of bloggers on the internet. Fans can follow his recovery from Tommy John surgery at krismedlen.blogspot.com. It seemed like it would be something fun to do," said Medlen. "I'm thinking about taking some videos of me interviewing my teammates and posting those, too..."

Meanwhile, fans by the thousands are "following" **Jason Heyward** (@JasonHeyward) and **Freddie Freeman**

(@FreddieFreeman) on Twitter. Among one of the more prolific "tweeters" is Braves Hall of Famer **David Justice** (@just_ice23), and don't forget to follow me on Twitter, too! @ChopTalkPatty...

When **Brian McCann** was named the Braves' nominee for the **Roberto Clemente Award**, it was especially meaningful to his wife, **Ashley**, a major force behind the couple's work in support of the Rally Foundation, and her father, **Eugene Jarusinski**, a Pittsburgh area native who grew up idolizing the late Clemente as a player. The McCanns gave Jarusinski a baseball autographed by Clemente for his 50th birthday earlier this year...

Matt Diaz is utilizing Facebook to spread the word about the work of the newly created MattE & **Leslee Diaz** Family Foundation. The Diaz family pledged to donate \$5 to the foundation for every person who became a "fan" of the Foundation's Facebook page - up to 10,000 fans by the end of the regular season, Oct. 3. "Half the money we raise will go to helping one of our favorite charities in Florida, Parker Street Ministries, renovate their building," said Diaz. "Some of the funds will go to assist Jenga, a min-

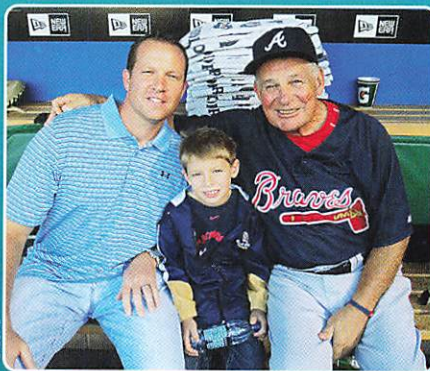
istry in Uganda one of our pastors is involved in, (jengauganda.org) and the rest will go to getting the Foundation up and running." Diaz regularly engages fans on the Foundation Facebook page, asking questions and answering a few, as well...

Several Braves players' charities are on Facebook. In addition to the Diaz Family Foundation, check out the Hudson Family Foundation Facebook page to learn how fans can become involved in player charities...

Brian Jordan was also among the

BULLPEN ALUM

BOBBY COX received a Sept. 8 visit in the dugout at Pittsburgh during batting practice from former Braves relief pitcher, **Kevin Gryboski**, and his son, **KJ** (5). Gryboski, who pitched for the Braves from 2002-04, is now retired from baseball. He and his family - wife, **Leah**, **KJ**, and daughter, **Kaylee**, live in the Pittsburgh area.

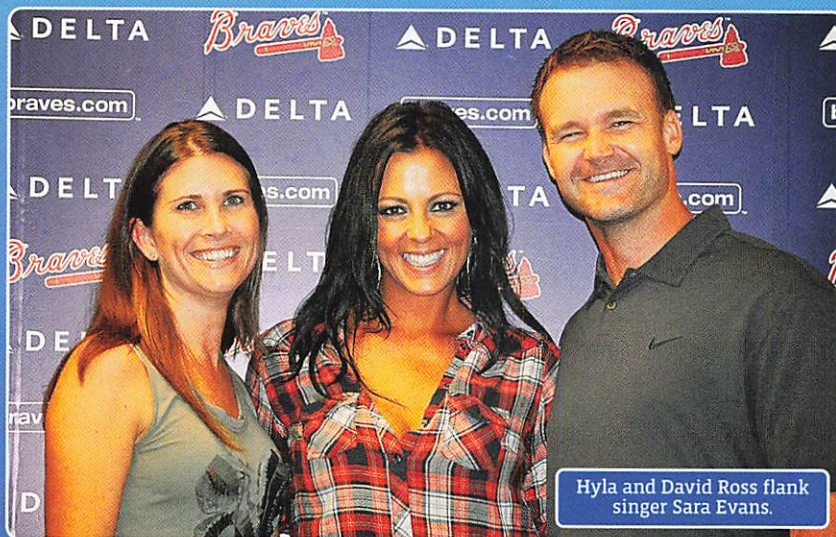


authors at the Decatur (Ga.) Book Festival over the Labor Day weekend, Sept 3-5. The Decatur Book Festival also featured Braves Hall of Fame broadcaster **Pete Van Wieren** and his "Of Mikes and Men" co-author **Jack Wilkinson**. Over 150 festival-goers filled a conference room Sept. 4 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Decatur to hear Van Wieren and Wilkinson talk about their collaboration and answer questions about the Braves. The book sold out quickly after the 45-minute discussion as fans lined up to get their copies autographed...

ChopTalk readers will recognize a familiar photo in a portfolio showing at ART Station, a gallery in Stone Mountain, Ga. The portfolio of work by Gwinnett Braves photo intern **Amanda Gardner** includes a large print of catcher **Clint Sammons** wearing his G-Braves uniform, sitting behind the wheel of a flashy red convertible. The picture was used in the story "I-85 Connection" which ran in the July 2010 issue of CT. The Sammons photo and the rest of Gardner's portfolio will be on display through Oct. 30...

A group of friends from the Braves 400 Club sat together at the Aug. 6 luncheon honoring **Tom Glavine's** induction into the Braves Hall of Fame. Long-time 400 Club member **Mary Lou Brooks** was the lucky winner of the #47-inspired table centerpiece...

Brian Jordan is hosting the Brian Jordan Celebrity Golf Classic to benefit the work of his foundation, assisting youth in the inner city. The tournament will be held Nov. 15, at the Marietta Country Club with a par party held the night before. For more information, contact the foundation at (770) 774-3516 or e-mail kwilliams@brianjordan-foundation.com.



Hyla and David Ross flank singer Sara Evans.

CONCERT-GOERS

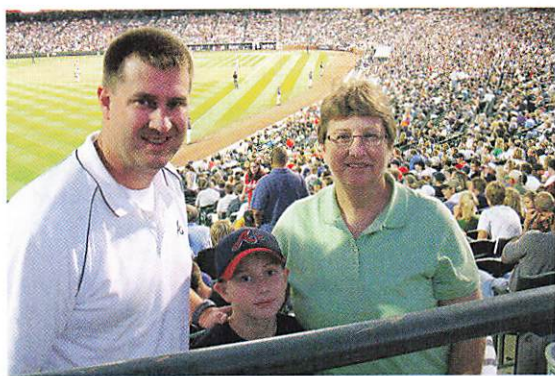
DAVID ROSS and his wife, **Hyla**, and **Brian Snitker** and his family, wife **Ronnie**, daughter **Erin** and son **Troy**, attended the post-game concert featur-

ing country music artist **Sara Evans**, Aug. 7 at Turner Field. They also stuck around after the game on Sept. 11 for a concert by country duo **Montgomery Gentry**.



CORNHUSKERS

Three generations of Braves fans drove to Denver, Colorado, from western Nebraska in late August to watch the Braves take on the Rockies. My Mom, Beth, my son, Quinton, and I got to Coors Field early enough to watch Derek Lowe warm up in the Braves bullpen. Eddie Perez



made my son's day when he tossed him a ball just before the game started. We usually can count on watching the Braves play a couple of games in person every year. This season we only made it to one game because school was back in session. We weren't the only Braves fans there that night who were disappointed when the Rockies won. We got back home at about 1 o'clock in the morning, but we will be ready to take the trip again next year. Any night at the ballpark is a good night, especially when the Braves are playing.

MATT JANECEK
Gering, Nebraska

LONG-DISTANCE LUNCH

I've been a Braves fan since 1992. I started watching baseball as a stress release. Being from North Carolina originally, I started to follow the Braves, especially since they were on TBS practically every night at that time. The magical 1995 season when the Braves were World Series Champions resonates with me more than any other. I had just gone through a painful divorce, and following the Braves became a major focus for me, a form of therapy. It gave me something to look forward to each evening, and what a season it turned out to be! To this day, I truly believe that following them that year kept me from going into depression. It was like a reality show, only 10 times better!

I'm now happily married to a wonderful man who used to live in Atlanta, and is also a huge Braves fan. I missed the Braves Hall of Fame inductions of David Justice and Greg Maddux, but there was no way that I was going to miss Tom Glavine's. My husband and I flew in from Silicon Valley, California, on the day before the induction, and I was like a little kid on Christmas Eve... I couldn't sleep a wink.

What an experience! Getting to meet and chat with Ron Gant, Ryan Klesko, Brian Jordan and Otis Nixon! To top it off, I was the highest bidder for Jason Heyward's signed jersey and the framed picture of Bobby Cox and Chipper Jones commemorating Bobby's 2,000th win! These treasures will be proudly displayed in our new game room. The Braves always will be my favorite team of any sport.

DONNA J. OVERSTREET
Gilroy, Calif.

WHAT A FAN!

This is my mother, Annis Harrell, at a Braves game on May 20. She turned 103 on July 22 and loves the Braves!

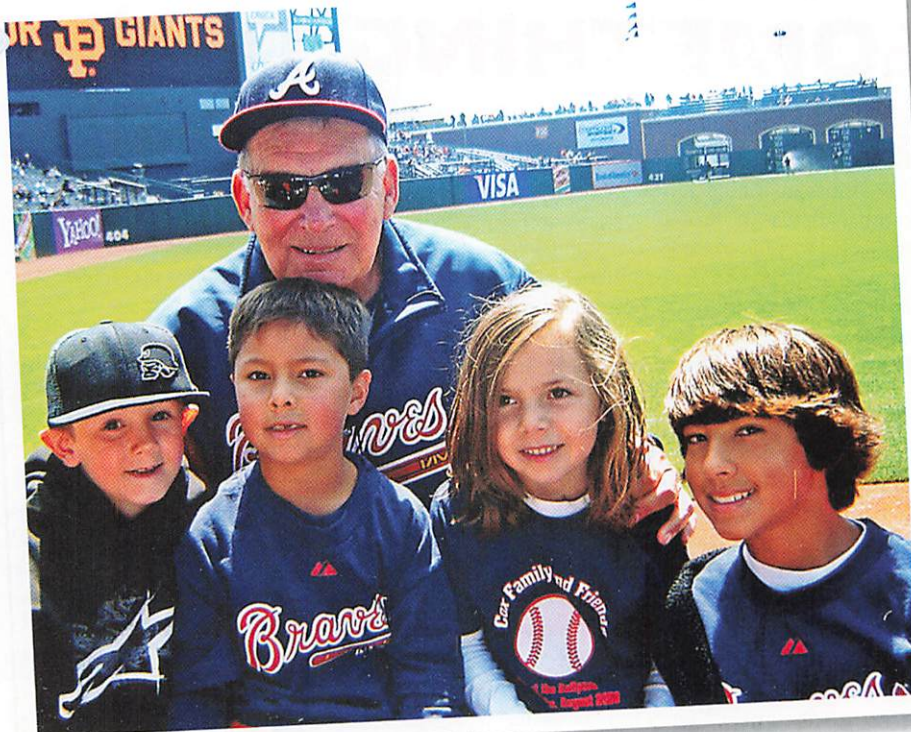
GERALDINE H. MITCHELL
Fayetteville, Ga.



COX FAMILY OUTING

In May 2008, 75 excited Cox family and friends attended a Braves game in San Francisco. We took a motor coach for three hours to reach the ballpark. We traveled from the Central Valley, which is where Bobby Cox was raised. He is my nephew, and I am very proud of him. He took time before the game to come out on the field and greet us. He signed autographs and posed for pictures with us. It was quite an exciting time for my grandchildren. Watching his games has been so entertaining for me. He will truly be missed in the dugout.

WANDA COX GREGORY
Clovis, Calif.



11 IN A ROW!

Since I'm a dedicated Braves fan, my family celebrates my birthday at a Braves game every year. This was the 11th consecutive year and my 86th birthday. How great spending the evening at a Braves game with my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The Braves won, too! I'm a long-time ChopTalk subscriber and look forward each month for its arrival so I can keep up with my team.

MILDRED GREEN
Jonesboro, Ga.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US

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SURPRISE ENDING



WELL....?!
WHAT DOES
IT SAY?!!!



SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT

BY JON ROSS

CASEY MORRIS and David Cutler uploaded a short musical tribute to the internet last December. It was a simple song, weaving words like "I'm a fan of Bobby Cox / and anything with tomahawks" into the melody of country singer Eric Church's "Love Your Love the Most."

The two Georgia Southern University students, who dubbed themselves the Tomahawk Dudes, didn't expect much from: "I Hate the Mets the Most." They just wanted to spread their love for the Braves and, if possible, get a bit of feedback in the process. What came next took them by surprise.

Fueled by a growing number of hits on YouTube (the video has now been viewed 3,635 times), the two Dublin, Ga., natives found themselves performing the piece on a hometown radio station. The Gwinnett Braves soon came calling, too, commissioning a theme song and requesting a pre-game concert.

So, the duo packed their guitars and made the four-hour trip to Coolray Field, their heads still reeling from their relatively quick rise to minor internet celebrity.

"The last two months, it's just gone big-time," said Cutler, the Tomahawk Dudes' main lyricist. "We never thought [all the attention] would happen. We're glad it did though."

The Tomahawk Dudes are the latest duo of singing Braves fans to find traction on YouTube. Morris and Cutler, who grew up rooting for Chipper, Andruw Jones and the rest of the 1990s-early 2000-era Braves icons, have so far recorded three tunes in spartan surroundings (two chairs, two guitars and a few pieces of Braves paraphernalia), and are about to upload a fourth song.

"I Hate the Mets the Most" juxtaposes stereotypical baseball themes with a simple premise: An intense dislike of the division rival New York Mets. Morris and Cutler perform original compositions as well. They wrote both the music and lyrics for their Gwinnett Braves theme and "Atlanta Braves All the Way" (sample lyric: "With a tomahawk yell / we'll all say, 'Bobby please come back'").

The sing-song melodies are augmented by acoustic guitar accompaniment and a few twangy riffs. The words, which focus most of all on family fun at the ballpark and Atlanta's baseball legacy, are heartfelt. Both "Atlanta



The Tomahawk Dudes - Casey Morris (L) and David Cutler - sang their Braves-themed songs before a game at Gwinnett's Coolray Field this season.

Braves All the Way" and "I Hate the Mets the Most" can be purchased from iTunes, with a portion of the proceeds going toward the charitable Atlanta Braves Foundation.

Braves fan songs starring 20-somethings strumming guitars while sitting on second-hand furniture certainly have a precedent on YouTube.

In August 2007, Auburn University students Andrew Hall and Tyler Crawford took to their ratty couch to perform the whimsical Mark Teixeira song. With the help of a steady stream of internet hits and a commercial on SportSouth, the ditty seemed to be everywhere. The two even took the tune (and the couch) to Turner Field for a pre-game performance.

Hall and Crawford went on to record videos heaping plaudits on Tim Hudson and another piece about the lowly Mets. The duo then vanished from the web entirely.

These two fan bands are miles apart in intent and direction. Cutler said he didn't model his lyrics off the earlier Teixeira tune, and he points to an intrinsic difference in the goal of the lyrics between the groups. His words are about rallying a fan base behind his favorite team.

The Tomahawk Dudes want to prop up the Braves by writing serious pieces that could be played on any South Georgia country station. Cutler and Morris have discussed recording additional videos, and these pieces — tributes to Jason Heyward, Chipper Jones and Bobby Cox — won't deviate from the duo's pop country formula.

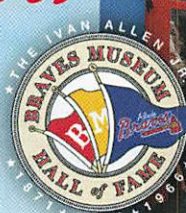
"We talked about doing a Chipper song — [but] not like the Mark Teixeira song, where it's funny," Cutler said.

Recording relatable, memorable videos has brought the Tomahawk Dudes a bit of notoriety, and that seems to be enough for them. Cutler and Morris are content hoping somebody will listen to their music during breaks in Braves telecasts or to fill the baseball void during the winter.

The guys have no ulterior motive for any of their compositions, except maybe securing a spot in front of the Braves Clubhouse Store at Turner Field for a riotous pre-game concert.

"Of course we would love to play at Turner Field, but we're just two college kids having fun," said Cutler. "We don't have any main goal. Whatever we get to do, we're thankful for. We just want to have fun with it."

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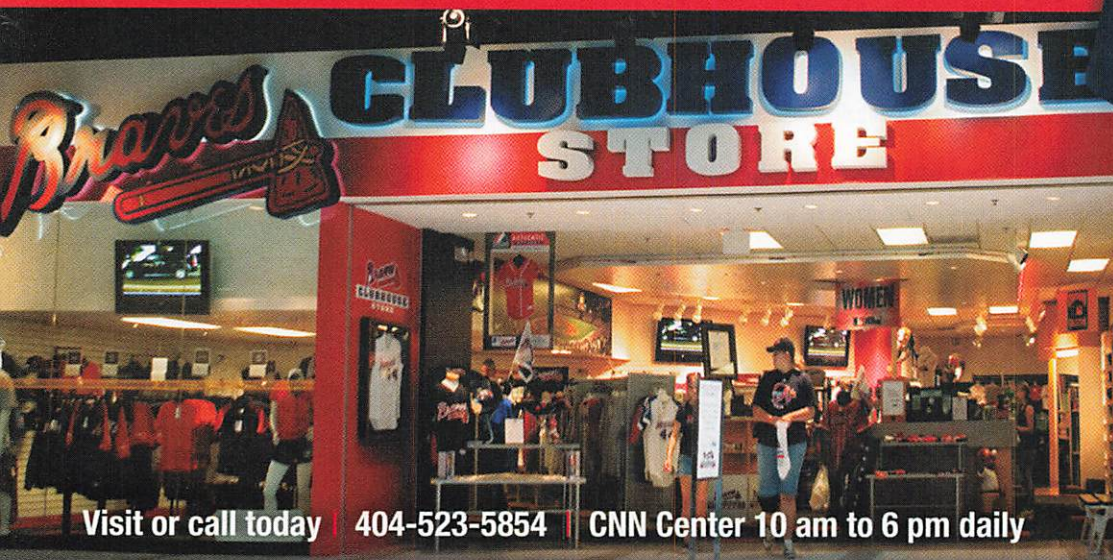
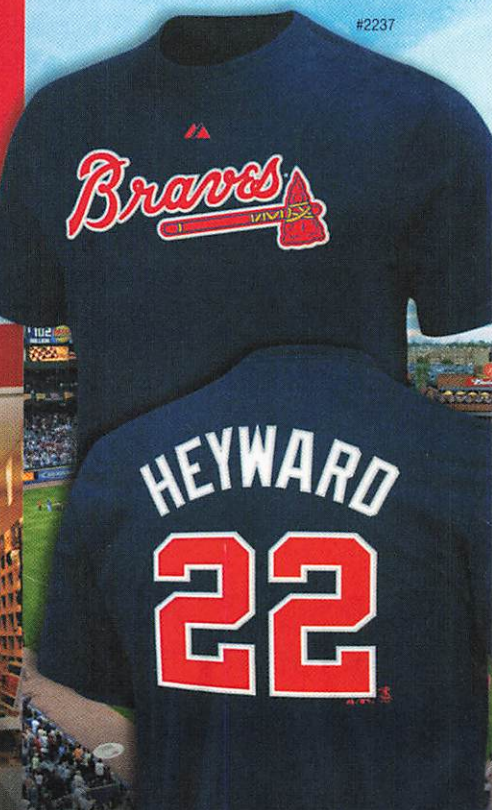
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MARCH/APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		MIN 7:00	MIN 12:00	WAS		WAS
WAS	MIL	MIL	MIL	MIL	PHI	PHI
PHI 1:30		FLA 7:00	FLA 7:00	FLA 7:00	NYM 7:30	NYM 7:00
NYM 1:30	LAD	LAD	LAD	LAD	SF	SF
SF	SD	SD	SD		STL 7:30	STL 7:00

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
STL 1:30	MIL 7:00	MIL 7:00	MIL 7:00	MIL 7:00	PHI 7:00	PHI
PHI		WAS 7:00	WAS 7:00	WAS 7:00	PHI 7:30	PHI 7:00
PHI 1:30	HOU 7:00	HOU 1:00	ARZ	ARZ	LAA	LAA
LAA		PIT	PIT		CIN 7:30	CIN 7:00
CIN 1:30	SD 1:00	SD 7:00				

*All times are Eastern and subject to change.
Schedule subject to change.

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			SD 7:00		NYM	NYM
NYM		FLA	FLA	FLA	HOU	HOU
HOU	HOU	NYM 7:00	NYM 7:00	NYM 7:00	TEX 7:30	TEX 7:00
TEX 1:30	TOR 7:00	TOR 7:00	TOR 1:00		SD	SD
SD	SEA	SEA	SEA			

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					BAL 7:30	BAL 7:00
BAL 1:30	COL 7:00	COL 7:00	COL 7:00	COL 1:00	PHI 7:30	PHI 7:00
PHI	ALL-STAR GAME - ARIZONA				WAS 7:30	WAS 7:00
WAS 1:30	COL	COL	COL	COL	CIN	CIN
CIN	PIT 7:00	PIT 7:00	PIT 7:00	PIT 7:00	FLA 7:30	FLA 7:00
FLA 1:30						

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	WAS	WAS	WAS		NYM	NYM
NYM	FLA	FLA	FLA		CHC 7:30	CHC 7:00
CHC 1:30	SF 7:00	SF 7:00	SF 7:00	SF 7:00	ARZ 7:30	ARZ 7:00
ARZ 1:30	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	NYM	NYM
NYM		WAS 7:00	WAS 7:00			

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				WAS 7:00	LAD 7:30	LAD 7:00
LAD 1:30	PHI	PHI	PHI		STL	STL
STL	FLA 7:00	FLA 7:00	FLA 12:00		NYM 7:30	NYM 7:00
NYM 1:30	FLA	FLA	FLA		WAS	WAS
WAS	PHI 7:00	PHI 7:00	PHI 7:00			

■ Home Game

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